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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Buzz Kanter
EDITOR Steve Lita
ART DIRECTOR/STAFF WRITER Tricia Szulewski
ASSISTANT EDITORS Tyler Greenblatt, Steven Wyman-Blackburn
SENIOR COPY EDITOR Keith Blair Powell
GUEST COLUMNIST Paul D'Orleans
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Gabe Ets-Hokin, Sarah Lahalih, Wayne Scraba, Vicki Smith
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS Paul Bicker, Bob Feather, Phil Hawkins, Michael Lahalih, Brian J. Nelson, Genevieve Schmitt, Vicki Smith



PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER Buzz Kanter
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT Gail Kanter
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CONTROLLER Charlene A. Grenier
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STAFF ACCOUNTANT Kathy Greco
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ADVERTISING

PHONE 203/425-8777 • FAX 203/425-8775

VP ADVERTISING

Terry O'Brien
 203/425-8777, ext. 112
 TerryO@TAMCommunications.com

SALES

Ken McCurdy
 203/425-8777, ext. 108
 KenM@TAMCommunications.com

AD COORDINATOR

Nicole Hart
 203/425-8777, ext. 116
 NicoleH@TAMCommunications.com

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Questions

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Letters@TheMotorcycleMag.com

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877/693-3577

Back Issues

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Editorial Offices

Motorcycle
 1010 Summer Street, 3rd Floor
 Stamford, CT 06905
 Phone: 203/425-8777
 Fax: 203/425-8775
 Email: Info@TheMotorcycleMag.com



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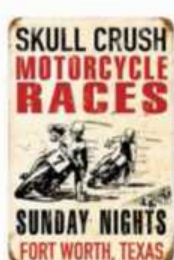
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PITTSBURGH

4" MAGNETIC PARTS HOLDER

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90566 shown

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REG. PRICE \$5.99

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SUPER COUPON

PITTSBURGH

MOTORCYCLE WHEEL CHOCK

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SAVE 40%

\$2999

REG. PRICE \$49.99

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4 PIECE 1" x 15 FT. RATCHETING TIE DOWNS

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SAVE 60%

\$799

REG. PRICE \$19.99

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SUPER COUPON

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

40 LB. CAPACITY FLOOR BLAST CABINET

LOT 62144
68893 shown

SAVE \$120

\$17999

REG. PRICE \$299.99

83344058

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SUPER COUPON

HEAVY DUTY RETRACTABLE AIR HOSE REEL WITH 3/8" x 25 FT. HOSE

LOT 46104/69266
69234 shown

SAVE \$50

\$4999

REG. PRICE \$99.99

83276134

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SUPER COUPON

10 PIECE BEARING RACE AND SEAL DRIVER SET

LOT 62624/95853 shown

SAVE 48%

\$2599

REG. PRICE \$49.99

83343110

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WOW SUPER COUPON

900 PEAK/700 RUNNING WATTS 2 HP (63 CC) 2 CYCLE GAS RECREATIONAL GENERATOR

LOT 66619/60338/62472/69381 shown

NEW

SAVE \$80

\$9999

REG. PRICE \$179.99

833269110

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SUPER COUPON

1000 LB. CAPACITY MOVER'S DOLLY

LOT 60497/93888 shown
61899/62399

SAVE 40%

\$899

REG. PRICE \$14.99

833266970

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SUPER COUPON

1500 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT

PITTSBURGH

SAVE \$80

\$6999

REG. PRICE \$149.99

LOT 69995 shown
60536/61632

83333212

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SUPER COUPON

60" 4 DRAWER HARDWOOD WORKBENCH

LOT 69054/62603/93454 shown

SAVE \$110

\$13999

REG. PRICE \$249.99

83363159

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WOW SUPER COUPON

20 TON SHOP PRESS

LOT 32879/60603 shown

Pair of Arbor Plates included

SAVE \$145

\$15499

REG. PRICE \$299.99

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SUPER COUPON

MECHANIC'S GLOVES

MEDIUM LOT 62434 62426
LARGE LOT 62433 62428
X-LARGE LOT 62432 62429 shown

SAVE 60%

\$399

REG. PRICE \$9.99

83300784

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SUPER COUPON

MECHANIC'S GLOVES

MEDIUM LOT 62434 62426
LARGE LOT 62433 62428
X-LARGE LOT 62432 62429 shown

SAVE 60%

\$399

REG. PRICE \$9.99

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WOW SUPER COUPON

US*GENERAL

30", 5 DRAWER TOOL CART

LOT 69397
61427/95272 shown

704 lb. Capacity

SAVE \$180

\$16999

REG. PRICE \$349.99

83306588

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SUPER COUPON

1500 WATT DUAL TEMPERATURE HEAT GUN (572°/1112°)

LOT 96289 shown
62546/62340

SAVE 70%

\$899

REG. PRICE \$29.99

83326664

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SUPER COUPON

PITTSBURGH

RAPID PUMP® 3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL FLOOR JACK

LOT 69227/62116
62584/62590/68048 shown

SAVE \$80

\$7999

REG. PRICE \$159.99

Weights 74 lbs.

83354911

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SUPER COUPON

60" 4 DRAWER HARDWOOD WORKBENCH

LOT 69054/62603/93454 shown

SAVE \$110

\$13999

REG. PRICE \$249.99

83363159

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AWARD WINNING QUALITY

PITTSBURGH MOTORCYCLE
1000 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT
LOT 69904/68892 shown

SAVE \$400

\$299⁹⁹ ~~\$429⁹⁹~~ REG. PRICE ~~\$699⁹⁹~~

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WOW SUPER COUPON

FREE

WITH ANY PURCHASE

PITTSBURGH
1" x 25 FT. TAPE MEASURE
LOT 69030 69031 69080 shown

\$6⁹⁹ VALUE

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WOW SUPER COUPON

SAVE \$50

CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING
90 AMP FLUX WIRE WELDER
LOT 61849/62719 68887 shown

\$99⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$149⁹⁹~~

• No Gas Required

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WOW SUPER COUPON

18 PIECE SAE AND METRIC T-HANDLE BALL END HEX KEY SET
PITTSBURGH

SAVE 35%

\$12⁹⁹ ~~\$16⁹⁹~~ REG. PRICE ~~\$19⁹⁹~~

LOT 62476 96645 shown

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WOW SUPER COUPON

3 GALLON, 100 PSI OILLESS PANCAKE AIR COMPRESSOR
LOT 60637/61615 95275 shown

SAVE 55%

\$39⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$89⁹⁹~~

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WOW SUPER COUPON

SUPER-WIDE TRI-FOLD ALUMINUM LOADING RAMP
HaulMaster
LOT 90018 shown 69595/60334

SAVE \$70

\$79⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$149⁹⁹~~

• 1500 lb. Capacity

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WOW SUPER COUPON

12" SLIDING COMPOUND DOUBLE-BEVEL MITER SAW WITH LASER GUIDE
CHICAGO ELECTRIC
LOT 61776/61969 61970/69684 shown

SAVE \$165

\$134⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$299⁹⁹~~

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WOW SUPER COUPON

3 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED HIGH SPEED STEEL STEP DRILLS
MAISON

SAVE 55%

\$8⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$19⁹⁹~~

• Drill 28 Hole Sizes

LOT 69087 60379 91616 shown

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WOW SUPER COUPON

72" x 80" MOVER'S BLANKET
HaulMaster
LOT 66537 shown 69505/62418

SAVE 66%

\$5⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$17⁹⁹~~

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WOW SUPER COUPON

HEAVY DUTY CHAIN BREAKER
PITTSBURGH
LOT 66488

SAVE 41%

\$9⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$16⁹⁹~~

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WOW SUPER COUPON

CENTECH NON-CONTACT INFRARED THERMOMETER WITH LASER TARGETING

SAVE 56%

\$25⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$59⁹⁹~~

LOT 96451/61894 60725/69465 shown

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WOW SUPER COUPON

ALUMINUM MOTORCYCLE WHEEL CLEANING STAND
HaulMaster
LOT 98800

SAVE 42%

\$19⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$34⁹⁹~~

• 500 lb. Capacity

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WOW SUPER COUPON

56", 11 DRAWER INDUSTRIAL QUALITY ROLLER CABINET
US GENERAL
LOT 69395/62499/67681 shown

SAVE \$500

\$699⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$1199⁹⁹~~

• Weighs 441 lbs.
• 3458 lb. Capacity

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WOW SUPER COUPON

6.5 HP (212 CC) OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINES
PREDATOR ENGINES
LOT 60363/69730/68120 LOT 68121/69727 shown CALIFORNIA ONLY

SAVE \$180

\$99⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$279⁹⁹~~

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WOW SUPER COUPON

350 LB. CAPACITY MOTOCROSS DIRT BIKE STAND
HaulMaster

SAVE 50%

\$19⁹⁹ REG. PRICE ~~\$39⁹⁹~~

LOT 66552

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International Incident



Do you like the pretty riding shots you see on the pages of *Motorcycle* magazine? I certainly hope so. The things we go through for you *Motorcycle* readers! You know ... the behind the scenes stuff. Well, maybe you don't know. The ridiculously early morning (dawn) photo shoots, the broken-down bikes. Making sure the bike

is as clean as can be so there's less Photoshop work later and dressing up in costumes for the aforementioned shoots.

All that happens before the lens cap even comes off the camera. Then, once we're riding, there's the matter of "scouting" for a location. Man, I hate scouting. Riding around in an unfamiliar locale sounds like fun, but when I'm on the hunt for the right background, my mind isn't thinking about the fun of riding a motorcycle. I'm thinking about where the sun is. Where will the sun be later? What's in the background? No telephone poles or guardrails, check. Is the road lightly traveled by cars and trucks for easy (read safe) turnaround spots? The photographer has to find the right spot to shoot from and hope that "right spot" isn't smack dab in the center of a poison ivy patch or that there isn't a beehive nearby.

Then the fun starts. Ride back and forth, up and down the road, through the curve or on a straightaway, checking with the shooter for "speed up" or "slow down" instructions. Back and forth, back and forth, do it again, once more. Maybe a couple more. Don't rev too high, don't make too much noise; we don't want to wake the neighbors. Some folks just don't appreciate motorcycles roaring past their house even once, let alone making 40 laps.

There are plenty of "incidents" I can tell about after 12 years doing this. There was the overprotective lady who called the cops because we were using her driveway as a turnaround. There was another incident in the Midwest involving an attractive farmer's daughter riding an ATV, a priest, a newspaper reporter, and a Barney Fife-like constable with one bullet in his gun. Don't ask. We look back and laugh now, but at the moment, it was quite surreal.

A recent incident occurred on foreign soil, on the wrong side of the road, in the rain, and included a fatality (sort of). While in England riding the new Royal Enfield Continental GT, which we featured in last month's issue, the surrealism overcame me again. In true cliché fashion, I can attest that it really does rain all the time in London.

On the final morning of our trip, we set off to shoot

when a steady rain started. After finding a park, our intrepid photographer trudged out into a field of tall, wet grass, trying to keep his expensive camera gear dry, and we made a few passes. An attendant berated our photographer for not having proper permits and questioned us about why we were "zooming" up and down the path (12 mph, folks, the slowest zoom you'll ever see). After our explanations, he graciously allowed us to continue.

A few more passes was all it took to attract a Land Rover with flashing lights on the roof and plenty of hi-vis reflective stripes all over. We weren't even asked what we were doing. Simply told, "You're done! Leave!" Yes, Her Majesty's Official Nature Park Reserve Bobbies were on the case now. As our photographer tried to offer an apology, he was told "We've already had a casualty in the park today."

"Oh my," he replied. "A rider? A pedestrian?" The ranger responded, "A badger." The Queen Mother must be quite grief-stricken. Folks, I couldn't make this stuff up if I tried. Shaking our heads, we rode off towards the hotel. I started thinking of the *Monty Python* skit "Dead Parrot Sketch."

I'm lucky I didn't see the backseat of that hi-viz-covered Land Rover for breaking out in laughter over the untimely demise of the Royal Badga'. That's us: the American motojourno squad avoided yet another international incident. **M**



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For years Continental has been making legendary adventure tires that have no equal. Now we've added the new **TKC 70**, designed to go beyond the limit of all other tires from the concrete jungle to gravel roads. But if you're the type who likes to go on long tours with your big dual-sport bike, our **ContiTrailAttack2** is still your first choice. And when the going gets tough, everyone knows that the **TKC 80** is the way to go. For these classic tires the rider is the only limit. You'll find more information at conti-moto.com



The D Word



Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, decided he'd better try one of those new fangled two-wheelers that were suddenly in vogue at the end of the 19th century. The safety bicycle had been invented, but not yet commercially dispersed, so what Twain rode was a hi-wheeler, or penny-farthing, which is, as everyone knows,

an awkward and spectacularly dangerous contraption.

Which is why they're only ridden today by eccentric English retronauts or at Burning Man with naked hippies aboard. Only one hi-wheeler was ever built with an engine — and a steamer at that — when Lucius Copeland cobbled up such a beast the very same year Twain test-rode his bicycle in 1884. Had Twain waited a year, he could have tried a proper motorcycle, as Hildebrand & Wolfmüller began “mass” producing its Motorrad just a few months later. Twain quite liked his bicycle ride, proclaiming “Get a bicycle! You will not regret it, if you live.”

It's an epic tagline, and one we should steal for motorcycling, regardless of the Motorcycle Industry Council. “Get a motorcycle! You will not regret it, if you live!” Twain was a cleverer writer than rider, but he did live for a while yet after his excursion (another 16 years actually, well into proper motorbike production), but as far as I've found, he never swung a leg over any sort of two-wheeler again. That's too bad, as his dry, witty satire concerning the relative merits of pioneering H-Ds or Indians would have resonated through the ages.

In my former career, I worked with fine particulates, and the label on the can says that they would kill me if I breathed in enough. I'm still waiting to see if I passed that notional limit. I also breathed in a lot of solvents, which I was assured will rot my brain cells, and surely imbibed plenty of lead from sanding off the paint of Victorian houses, plus the asbestos from old brake shoes and heating ducts. I'm still waiting for that knock on the door from the hooded dude with a scythe. Will he tell me which one of these things finally did the trick? I'm dying to know. Just kidding. I doubt the man in black reveals the litany of sins, which conspire to my doom, and I couldn't relay the information back to the land of the living even if he does.

“See, it was the ____!” Nope, we don't get that chance. A big life-ending catastrophe is the only obvious cause of death. And, you know, motorcycles can provide that. I've known a few folks who went out on bikes, some whom

I've loved very much. Motorcycles can be fatal, it's true, but more specifically, car drivers can be fatal to motorcyclists. Funny thing is that all those folks warning us about death by motorcycle are members of a motorcycle-killing populace: nonriding automobile drivers. They're effectively warning us against themselves, knowing deep in their hearts that they'll kill us all to prove a point: bikes are dangerous! So, to reduce motorcycle fatalities, take cars off the road or educate drivers that something other than SUVs share the road. Better, force everyone to ride a scooter for a year in urban traffic — those who survive can drive.

You won't regret it, if you live. And you will live, especially if you have a bit of rider education, some modest safety equipment, and even a smidge of luck — the vast, enormous percentage of us do. More importantly, you won't regret it; if Mark Twain had gotten past his first wobbly/scary moments on a bicycle, he would surely have given higher praise to that miracle of physics which is two-wheel travel. The feelings engendered by motorcycling more properly deserve a symphony than a quip ... or poetry or a good novel, and people have tried. Let's not complain that life's great joys are mingled with danger, nor listen to those who warn us against living how we choose. If you enjoy the heady pleasures of riding, you won't regret it. And you will have lived. **M**



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During The Witching Hour



Left: A Ghost Rider

You hear it all the time. Sayings like “Live free and ride” or “Ride till ya die and then ride some more.” I just recently rode to North Dakota and back from western Kansas. All in all, my trip went smoothly, no breakdowns or flat tires. I even stopped in South Dakota and took in the national monuments. But those are some seriously desolate two-lane highways. When I say desolate, I mean nothing but sky and road for 100-mile stretches. And when you come to a town, I use the word *town* loosely, as the “town” may or may not even have services. Anyways, when you do come upon a town, you find yourself checking the gas gauge, wondering if you can make the next one. Or do you stop and see about filling up in this town that looks more like a backdrop to a classic horror movie? Since I generally do the bulk of my riding at night, somewhere between North and South Dakota, I saw something, or experienced it, if you will. With that in mind, if you ever find yourself stranded on an empty highway late at night during the witching hour, you may catch a glimpse of him ... if you do, don't fear ... as he scares the hellish things back into the darkest recesses of the shadows ...

Jeremy Martinson
Ponies-Studios.com

Women Riders

Genevieve Schmitt's column in the May/June issue states that women represent 25 percent of the motorcycle riding population, a 50 percent increase from

1998. I live just off the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina, the motorcycling mecca in the East. I frequent the Parkway and enjoy stopping to chat with traveling motorcyclists taking breaks at scenic overlooks. I rarely see a female rider. If one in four riders is a woman, then women must all live in other areas of the country or they keep their bikes parked. A good friend of mine is a rider in Ohio, and she says that she sees more females there than in North Carolina but nowhere near 25 percent. I used Google to see if I could validate this statistic and was unable to come up with any number that is remotely close to 25 percent, no matter what the source. Was that simply a misprint?

Dan
Via Internet

The statistics quoted were obtained from the Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC), an OEM-backed organization that regularly polls motorcycle ownership. The motorcycle industry regularly uses the MIC statistics as benchmarks. If you visit the states with the largest concentration of motorcycle ownership, California, Florida, Arizona, and Ohio, you'll see the stats on female ridership are indeed what I quoted. —Genevieve Schmitt

Bask In Daytona's History

Very entertaining read on the Daytona 200 in the March/April issue by Steven Wyman-Blackburn. I've always wondered what it was like to have raced on that hard-packed white sand. Of course, you can't cover every single race and barbecue in the event's history, but my mind was taken back to its early international standing. Well before the European racers showed up in

Continued on page 81

Honda 2016 RC213V-S Limited Production

If you're into sportbikes, especially if you're a sportbike rider who also happens to be a MotoGP fan and watched with baited breath when Marc Marquez raced astride the Honda RC213V during the last two MotoGP world championships, then you will undoubtedly want to swing your leg over the 2016 Honda RC213V-S, a street-going version of the RC213V. Best of all, when being modified for use beyond the circuit, Honda claims the S was barely altered. That said, only a select few will get the chance to own one; it's a limited-production model, and reservations began on July 12. Developed with close collaboration between Honda's Motorcycle R&D Center and HRC, the S sports a rendition

of the RC213V's engine, a 90-degree 999cc powerplant, which is reinforced with titanium connecting rods and a sandcast aluminum crankcase. Featuring a highly centralized mass, the S not only has race-derived components (under-seat fuel tank and carbon fiber-reinforced plastic fairing), but it's armed with parts inherited directly from the official racer: the swingarm, slipper clutch, magnesium Marchesini wheels (17" on the S), pressurized Öhlins fork, adjustable footrests and foot controls, and Brembo brake components. High-tech highlights include throttle-by-wire, selectable power modes, engine-brake control, and traction control, with position-detection technology developed through Honda's ASIMO project. This nearly full-blown MotoGP bike is available for \$184,000 in HRC Tricolor, Carbon Fiber.



Kawasaki 2016 Z800 ABS

In the wake of the 40-year anniversary of the more aggressively revamped Kawasaki Z1000, the Japanese manufacturer has now added another dynamically amplified Z model. The 2016 Kawasaki Z800 ABS is a mid-size version (806cc) of the latest Z1000 (1043cc) but it doesn't pull back on that extra punch. The force behind it comes from a fuel-injection system that combines the injectors with 34mm Keihin throttle bodies and sub throttles. With wide-radius crankshaft journals, 1.2mm piston-cooling oil jets, and a low-friction camshaft chain

adding extra durability, all that oomph from the powertrain comes out of radius-curved header pipes with the low-midrange enforced by a back-pressure-wave-tuning exhaust valve that's positioned upstream of the muffler.

The design of the pipes, with equalizer tubes connecting the first and fourth headers as well as the second and third, also enhances the bike's handling and performance. The short-style exhaust made it possible for engineers to take some weight off the 800 by eliminating the center pipe, too, and the short muffler aids mass centralization via its cross-section for optimum lean angles. And maximum perform-

ance is utilized by the Z800's smooth-shifting, short-geared six-speed tranny with a tall sixth gear.

The sportbike-riding capabilities of the Z800 are mostly delivered by its redesigned chassis, the concept of which was borrowed from the Z1000. A high-tensile steel tubular backbone adds to the rigidity of the 800, which is enforced by the lightweight cast aluminum engine subframe, slimming down and, in turn, aerodynamically improving the overall frame. The engine subframes, braced in the front from left to right for added rigidity and handling stability, also allow the engine mounts to be positioned behind the cylinders and therefore closer to the engine's center of gravity, another performance-enhancing amenity. Of course, the Z800 not only acts aggressively but looks pissed, too, through its forward-leaning stance and compact, low-positioned headlight cowl, which create what Kawasaki calls "a menacing 'face.'" This beast-like look continues the mentality and stylistic techniques behind the Z1000, what Kawasaki had dubbed Sugomi, the crouching predator. For the Z800, Kawasaki uses the profound description of how the upper

engine shrouds appear as if they're clutching the engine, "creating the image of a predator holding prey in its mouth."

Speed-hungry riders are kept in check through a preload-and-rebound-damping adjustable 41mm KYB inverted fork up front; a stepless, rebound-damping adjustable Kawasaki Uni-Trak suspension with a KYB shock and piggyback reservoir out back; dual-opposed four-piston front brake calipers and 277mm petal-type front rotors, and a rear 216mm petal-type rotor and single-piston caliper. All of this is complemented by a lightweight Nissin ABS unit as standard.

The Z800 is equipped with all the modern goodies you would expect: three LCD screens, a speedometer, odometer, clock, dual trip meters, and more. A neat anti-theft feature: the engine won't start without the correct key being used. Other highlights include six-spoke hoops wrapped in Dunlop Sportmax D214 radial tires, and standard luggage hooks.

The 2016 Kawasaki Z800 ABS is a 49-state model (not California) and is available in Metallic Spark Black/flat ebony for \$8,399 with a 12-month warranty.



Suzuki 2016 Bandit 1250S ABS

Suzuki has come back with a vengeance. And we're finally seeing a Bandit return to the ranks of Suzuki's overall lineup, the 2016 Bandit 1250S ABS. Until this latest release, Suzuki's Standard family has been comprised mostly of sportier bikes like the GSX. However, Suzuki's Bandit is adding some diversity to the group ... twofold. Each new rendition of the Bandit has been edging closer and closer to the sport-touring segment, and this 2016 Bandit is tipping the scales further towards that style.

Among these tour-friendly, but-still-sport-like amenities is the return of the S' signature half-fairing, which had been replaced in 2010 with a fuller fairing. This design had made the S more akin to the full-faired F model Bandit. Not only is the half-fairing back on the new S, but it's been redesigned to wrap around the radiator shrouds (adding even more sporty appeal). To compensate for the

loss of protection from a full fairing, engineers added a front vent below the headlight, which smoothes out airflow behind the fairing, which also enhances aerodynamics. The bike's ergonomics are improved by a contoured seat that can be adjusted 20mm up and down. New to this model is an ABS system that monitors wheel speed and matches stopping power to the available traction. Supporting the ABS are fully floating 310mm dual front brake discs with four-piston calipers and a 240mm rear disc with a single-piston caliper. The 2016 Bandit also has Suzuki Dual Throttle Valve (SDTV) digital closed-loop EFI. Of course, the Bandit is still armed with its 1255cc, liquid-cooled, fuel-injected, DOHC, four-cylinder powerplant; six-speed tranny, and 4-into-1 exhaust with a catalyzer and HO₂ sensor. Holding all that up off the ground are Showa 43mm forks with adjustable spring preload and a rear shock with adjustable rebound damping and spring preload. The 2016 Bandit 1250 ABS is available for \$9,899 in red or black.

2016 GSX-S1000F ABS

Suzuki began introducing its 2016 lineup way ahead of schedule when it was still unveiling various 2015 model-year bikes. Spearheading the charge was the all-new 2016 GSX-S1000, a less aggressive version of the GSX-R that could take on the streets. Now, Suzuki has introduced a sportbike version of the new S1000, the 2016 GSX-S1000F ABS, which unlocks some of the restrained energy of its brother. Combating that extra onward

force of wind is a windshield-equipped fairing unique to this model that doesn't sacrifice this new beast's persona but amplifies it, adding more jagged lines to the overall design. In addition to reaching down to protect the sides of the bike, the F's new fairing also houses an expanded lighting system to more capably light the speed-blurred roads as riders zoom ahead. The height, of course, has therefore been boosted by 4" (46-1/2"), adding some poundage in the process (10-plus pounds for a total of 471). While the outer shell of the bike has been altered to improve aerodynamics, the same powerful 999cc engine is still pumping all of that force out of its 4-into-2-into-1 exhaust system. And the F includes all of the features seen in the GSX-S series thus far, including ABS as standard. Adding the fairing bumps up the MSRP by \$500 for a grand total of \$10,999. The 2016 GSX-S1000F ABS comes in Metallic Triton Blue and Glass Sparkle Black/Candy Daring Red. **M**





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NIP TUCK

NOT JUST ANOTHER PRETTY FACE

A

few years back, I wrote a new bike review of the Kawasaki Versys 650. With its mid-sized twin powerplant and seemingly endless lean-angle ability, it quickly became a favorite of mine. Quirky looks be damned. For those who make icky faces because of some nonconventional appearance, I have some advice for you: roll with it,

get over yourself. Alas, the little Versys was a moderate sales success (and I'm only presuming that based on how many I saw out and about). American riders pined for its big brother, Versys 1000, formerly only available in Europe and Australia as an alternative to the BMW GSs, Ducati Multistradas, Yamaha Super Ténérés, and, for some time, the larger Suzuki V-Stroms available here. So, like Suzuki with its V-Strom 650 in the US, Kawasaki was reluctant to bring a second, larger-displacement adventure-touring model to our shores.

And, besides, Kawasaki already had a full boat of other touring alternatives to choose from with the Concours 14, Ninja 1000, and even the KLR, not to mention mega-cruiser-bruiser touring machines based on the Vulcan 1700. But the fresh-faced 2015 Versys 1000 LT fills a nice slot between hyper-bike-based tourer and real-world, comfy commuter machine.

While the looks are a huge departure from the alien-looking, stacked-headlight Versys of the past, this Versys is more akin to its Ninja 1000 sister ship. Heck, when comparing the saddlebags, the profile of the Versys looks like a tall, half-faired Ninja to me.

I was on hand last October at AIMExpo in Orlando, Florida, for the unveiling of this model, but I pitied the poor Versys for having to share the stage with the new H2 and H2R. When the presentation was over, the moto-journalists were invited onstage for a closer look, and with throngs of cell phone shooters clamoring for a clear shot of the new hyper bike, the Versys 1000s on display were relatively ignored. Most reactions by the press were "Yeah, the new Versys looks great. But did you see that supercharger logo on the supercharger, which you can't actually see, on that bike over there?!"

But I bided my time, anticipating the arrival of the







new versatile Versys to the US. Unfortunately, the folks at Kawasaki planned a European press launch for this model, as they claimed it was such an important model for them in Europe. If Kawasaki showed the poor Versys as much attention as it does the H2, we'd probably see more folks riding a Versys in real life. With no US press ride planned, I went for the Kawasaki jugular and placed my request for a long-term loaner early. (And Kawasaki fell for it!) Ahhhh ... the long-term loaner; it's the bane of OEM accountants' existence and a joy like no other for the media outlet. A sweet bike, for an extended time period, to ride anywhere at any time. Sweet!

You'll notice that the Versys 1000 LT in our possession got treated to a few road warrior upgrades to help us make the miles go by a little easier (see sidebar). Not that the Versys really needed all the add-ons, as it offers plenty for the avid touring rider, and with its comfortable, upright seating position, versatility is its forte.

Let's start with the fun stuff: the reliable and powerful liquid-cooled 1043cc in line four engine packs a wallop on highway on-ramps (or anywhere else for that matter).

You'll be exceeding speed limits effortlessly on the Versys 1000 LT. It flat out screams when you crank the throttle open. Two different diameter pipes at the outlet of the exhaust canister act like a two-stage muffler with a quiet side for mild mannered riding, and a more boisterous path of travel for the exhaust gasses when you gun it, yet there's no cable-operated servo on this example. Engine map riding modes are limited to two choices: a simple Full or Low Power (75 percent). Mode change is easily commanded with a flick of the simple-yet-effective left handlebar-mounted selector switch. Low mode doesn't completely castrate the beast, but there's a noticeable power mute. Probably perfect for riding in the rain, for example.

An air intake between the headlights feeds the four-cylinder engine as speed increases. A six-speed transmission and chain drive are fed by a clutch-assist system for easy shifts, and a slipper function helps prevent wheel hop when downshifting.

In addition to the power output modes, there are three KTRC (Kawasaki TRaction Control) modes and ABS brakes to boost rider confidence. In this day and age of seemingly limitless tuning options, it may seem like a rudimentary offering, but for real-world riding, let's keep it simple, and the Versys does just that. Additionally, there's an ECO Economical Riding Indicator that shows when the motorcycle is being ridden in a responsible adult manner. There's

nothing adjustable here, except for modulating your right wrist in coordination with being in the right gear for a self-serving pat on the back.

The aforementioned facelift has resulted in an aggressive front fairing styling akin to the Ninja line of products. Not necessary in my book, but sex sells. Out back are a pair of standard KQR (Kawasaki Quick Release) 28-liter side-opening hardbags, albeit a little oddly shaped, but very handy and lockable using the same key as the ignition, so there are no multiple keys to fumble with here. The hand guards aren't intended to be bark-busters on the Versys, but rather to protect the rider from the elements. A moderately sized factory windshield is easily adjustable by turning two thumb wheels and simply sliding the clear screen up or down by



2015 KAWASAKI VERSYS 1000 LT	
LIST PRICE	\$12,799
ENGINE	Liquid-cooled in line four
VALVETRAIN	DOHC, four valves per cylinder
DISPLACEMENT	1043cc
BORE X STROKE	77mm x 56mm
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.3:1
FUEL SYSTEM	Digital EFI, four 38mm throttle bodies with oval sub throttles
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed
FINAL DRIVE	Chain
FRONT SUSPENSION	43mm, preload and rebound adjustable, 5.9" of travel
REAR SUSPENSION	Horizontal shock, preload and rebound adjustable, remote preload adjuster, 5.9" of travel
FRONT TIRE	Battlax Sport Touring T30 120/70-17"
REAR TIRE	Battlax Sport Touring T30 180/55-17"
FRONT BRAKES	ABS; 310mm discs, dual four-piston calipers
REAR BRAKE	ABS; 250mm disc, single-piston caliper
OVERALL LENGTH	88.2"
WHEELBASE	59.8"
RAKE/TRAIL	27 degrees/4.1"
SEAT HEIGHT	33.1"
FUEL CAPACITY	5-1/2 gallons
CURB WEIGHT	549 pounds
WARRANTY	24 months
2015 COLORS	Flat Ebony/Metallic Spark Black, Candy Burnt Orange/Metallic Spark Black

ACCESSORIES

While Kawasaki offers a host of add-ons to outfit the Versys 1000, like a 47-liter top case, LED light bar, GPS bracket, grip heaters, bag liners, radiator guard, axle sliders, and a gear position indicator (which can be neatly mounted into the dash area), we decided to add a few goodies of our own to show the huge support the aftermarket has for the Versys line. Be sure to visit TheMotorcycleMag.com to see a step-by-step install tutorial on some of the parts.

GIVI D4105ST Windscreen

\$135, GIVIUSA.com

Taller than the Versys' stock windshield by 6.3", the Specific Screen is a transparent piece that measures 19.3" x 18.9".

GIVI OBK42A Trekker Outback Top Case

\$455, GIVIUSA.com

This 42-liter top case doesn't require any special rack to be installed and can be attached onto any monkey plates on all motorcycles. Due to its reduced width, riders should have no problem fully opening side cases without having to remove the Trekker Outback. The Trekker Outback can carry a full-face or modular helmet. The top case is also available in silver. The Outback has plenty of bungee attachment points on its lid and a stainless steel latching mechanism.

Denali DRI LED Auxiliary Lights

\$350, TwistedThrottle.com

The DRI light really lights the night, perfect for riding where maximum beam distance is desired. The 10-degree optic concentrates a spot beam pattern almost 700' down the center of the road and illuminates the canopy as you pass and takes only 10 watts of power per lamp to operate. A 10-watt CREE XM-L2 LED bulb is housed in the 3-3/4" round housing. Bike-specific brackets and wire kits are also available.

Denali SoundBomb Split Dual-Tone Air Horn

\$55, TwistedThrottle.com

Get noticed with a blast of 120 decibels. The 12-volt Denali SoundBomb is four times louder than a typical motorcycle horn! The compact Split Horn is comprised of two parts, which separates the compressor from the acoustic unit, allowing the horn to fit in extremely tight spaces. The compressor measures 4-1/2" x 2.9" x 3.0", and the horn comes in at 4.1" x 3.7" x 3.4". Mount them separately, connect with supplied heat-resistant air hose, power it up, and you'll get noticed.



M ROAD TESTED

Switch Pathfinder Sunglasses

\$180 • SwitchVision.com

Why do they call them Switch sunglasses? Because you can switch out components quickly. Pathfinders feature a Magnetic Interchange Lens System, which uses high-energy magnets embedded in the lens and frame to enable lens swaps easily as light conditions change. Also, these sunglasses include a foam wrap around the eye cushion, which allows airflow and ventilation. The lens is large, and soft rubber nose pads keep them on comfortably. The frame is flexible yet tough with injected nylon, which easily slips into a motorcycle helmet. The temples include a TPR insert for added grip.

- + The ability to change them as needed.
- + A tough zippered eyeglass storage case included.

— You need to carry the extra components.

Racer Elevate Gloves

\$95 • RacerGlovesUSA.com

The Elevate Goretex glove is waterproof, well-insulated, and comfortable, thanks to the soft Polartec fleece liner. It's great for those chilly morning rides. For protection, there's D3O shock padding covered with anti-abrasion fabric on the palm. A handy feature is the "cuff magnet" that adheres to metal surfaces (like a fuel tank) so your gloves stay put when you take a break. A cowhide chassis and waterproof zipper cuff closure provide a snug fit.

- + Toasty warm inside.

— Sizing runs a tad small.

Klim K Fifty I Riding Pants

\$290 • Klim.com

You might have noticed the Klim riding gear firm coming on strong in the street-wear market. I cheer this move. These comfortable denim riding pants provide abrasion resistance, impact coverage, and good looks. The K Fifty I is a regular-fit CORDURA denim jean with integrated D3O knee and hip armor inside.

- + Lots of peace-of-mind padding inside.

— Thick padding at the knees makes the pants ride up your leg.

Harley-Davidson Motocruz Boots

\$240 • Harley-DavidsonFootwear.com

You'd expect Harley to offer touring gear, but an adventure-touring boot? Sure! Here's the 11"-tall Motocruz, which features a full-grain leather upper with a pad on the front, which has a modest heel height of just 1-1/4". The comfortable cushion sock lining inside feels great. There's easy-entry and removal, thanks to the long YKK-locking inside zipper, and there's plenty of traction, courtesy of a Goodyear welt.

- + Buckles add to the tough look.
- + Shift pad sewn in on top of boot is welcome.

— Not waterproof.



approximately 3" in its tracks. Wind protection is decent, but we, again, added an aftermarket product to maximize protection. The rider's office displays an analog tachometer and digital panel for speedometer, fuel level, clock, riding mode, traction control setting, air temp, fuel range, and tripmeters.

The whole package rolls on a twin-spar aluminum frame, equipped with a long-travel suspension that's comprised of a KYB inverted 43mm front fork with one-sided rebound adjustment on the right tube and a horizontal back-link rear shock. The rear preload is easily managed via a remote preload adjuster. There's a standard centerstand for stability for parking and performing maintenance.

The brakes are ample, using ABS, a pair of 310mm rotors and four-piston calipers up front, and a

single-piston caliper with 250mm rotor out back. The three-mode KTRC is standard. Sporty street touring is emphasized, and the Versys uses 17" wheels and Bridgestone Battlax Sport Touring T30 tires.

The Versys 1000 has sportbike DNA infused in a touring package, with strong acceleration and real-world comfortable ergonomics. This bike can serve duty as an adult's commuter workhorse or fun getaway machine. It's no wonder why all brands are offering a variation on this theme, and the competition is fierce in this segment. While many parts of the world have embraced the tall naked touring mounts — and Kawasaki considers this an important bike for itself in Europe — with all the Versys 1000 has to offer, real riders should consider it an important bike for us here in the US. **M**





Dreamers (pl.) by Steven Wyman-Blackburn

Dream Racer is more than just a film about a French-Australian business consultant who takes it upon himself to undergo the rigorous demands and hardships of the Dakar Rally. Then again, especially after watching the 90-minute-plus documentary, maybe the word *just* isn't an accurate way of saying it.

The brave soul who somehow summons the courage to do all this via motorcycle — and it should be mentioned that he attempted the rally raid a few years before, forced to pull out due to an injury he sustained during the ride — is Christophe Barriere-Varju. Not only does Christophe have to face such a grueling endeavor, but he has to prepare himself in ways that will undoubtedly exceed your expectations. To get an idea, the rally doesn't actually start until after the 30-minute mark where the viewer is presented with problem after problem that all have to do with just getting ready for Dakar, which is only made worse by a “ticking clock” (he needs to raise \$120,000 in six months).

For starters, Christophe has to train rigorously (rock-to-rock jumping, sprinting up a sandy hill while carrying his bike over his head, and kayaking: “it’s very good for balance. You’re always adjusting on your abs, which is a similar feeling to riding a motorcycle”). These scenes are effective because they provide a glimpse of the larger

picture: completing the Dakar Rally involves so much more than just executing sick riding skills, especially for an amateur. And these scenes are one of the major nail-biting moments in the film, which transform the dream into an even more unattainable goal, if this were even possible.

It’s from these struggles where the documentary’s title is undoubtedly derived, and, consequently, why it’s being marketed and reviewed as “an inspiring account of the fear of life going by unfulfilled and the pursuit of

dreams as the antidote to this fear.”

And people voraciously absorb everything that has anything remotely to do with an underdog realizing his dreams, as evidence by the many accolades *Dream Racer* has garnered: two wins, two official selections, one runner up, and a nomination. *Dream Racer* is also apparently the only film that is Dakar-related to have won

- + More than just Wikipedia-digested facts.
- + Plenty of action riding shots.
- Watching “the whole story” can get tiresome.

SOURCES

Dreamracer Pty Ltd
DreamRacer.tv

anything since the rally's inception in 1979. Cool.

But while a great deal of the documentary is before Dakar, that doesn't mean the rally is belittled. The sheer scale of the cross-continent trek is displayed via a map, where we literally watch the course being charted via a line (brown for Liaison, an untimed section on the road, and blue for Special, an off-road portion), which guides the viewers as we watch, as we're told, 16 days of 800-1,000km daily riding stages, complete with rally riding shots (with ATVs, four-wheelers, motorcycles, etc.) and footage of the goings-on at the various places the participants camp out afterwards. To break up the monotony (if the Dakar Rally could even be remotely monotonous), Simon Lee, the writer/producer/director, finds different ways of translating the events of the day. As you probably were expecting, the best riding scenes are saved for last. And each night presents something unique to the viewer that's just as essential as the rally scenes. One of the more resonant ones is when Christophe shows an official Dakar Rally road map and explains what the various symbols mean, revealing how he marks it up with green, red or pink, and blue markers.

But, again, as noted at the beginning, this is more than just a tale about a businessman achieving his dream of completing the Dakar Rally; it's a tale of two dreamers. Like any exceptional storyteller, the personality of the writer is able to shine through and, in more ways than one, morphs into a character of his own. As it turns out, Simon took this to the next step. Not only does he appear in his creation but plays a pivotal role. As Christophe strives to finish the Dakar Rally, Simon hopes that "this could be the movie I've been waiting to make."

This sets the theme for the entire film: we are watching two different dreams come to fruition. So while

many viewers are most likely more interested in the rally, and even though we all know there will be a movie because, spoiler alert, we're watching it, the underlining fear of it failing adds a layer of dread, leaving us all in a limbo of uncertainty.

What's more, when Simon's "problems" are juxtaposed with Christophe's own struggles, the comparison only intensifies everything

Christophe accomplishes in a way that, while maybe inadvertently, makes Simon's journey all the less significant. This is especially the case when a motosports journalist named Jacob Black joins Simon to follow the rally's course safely on the highway by car.

Probably the most effective comparison takes place when Jacob and Simon are facing a serious problem that could very well spell certain doom to the entire operation: they need to fill-up fast or they'll be forced to pull over because they're

running out of gas quick! But, luckily, hope shines through the darkness. "Wait, there's a Shell!" Jacob exclaims (rather lazily), followed by "Woos" and "yah, babys," which Simon caps off with a triumphant yell, "We're saved!" After being witness to their salvation, we are immediately transported to the desert where we watch Christophe crashing.

In the end, much like how Simon describes the essence of catching one's dreams, we all know the pursuit thereof is never easy, which is what makes dreams all the more appealing.

Dream on by renting exclusively via Vimeo On Demand (\$6.95) for 48 hours of streaming on any device. Or make your dream a reality by getting it on DVD or Blu-Ray for a little more. **M**



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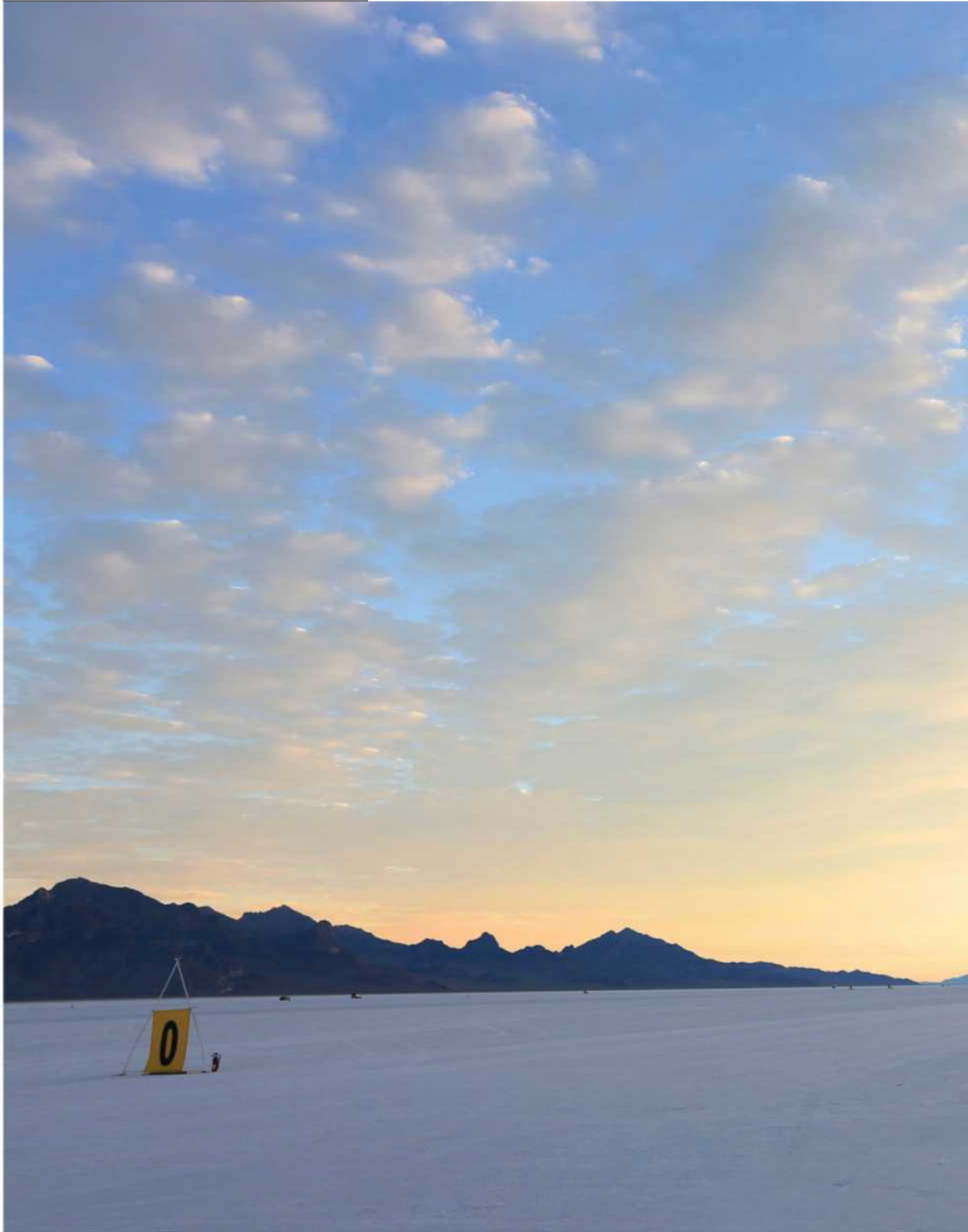
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CHASING TIME

EXPERIENCING THE SALT





M

y view, the curvature of the earth. I reached up and clinched my prayer beads one more time and silently recited my mantra as I slowly rotated the beads through my hand: "Health, safety, success." I've found that proximity to the proverbial "edge" seems to have a direct correlation for a need to call on a higher power.

My lungs expanded deeply. I waited for the green flag to drop with the same anticipation I had as a child, waiting to be waved down the slide at the water park. Not afraid, but anxious, so anxious.

I had been on starting lines before, both literally and metaphorically. This one, though, this one would forever change me. This one was seeping into my being by way of osmosis from the salt-covered earth below me. That same salt holds 100 years of the blood, sweat, tears, and dreams of so many before me, and if you don't believe in ghosts, you will once you set foot on this ground. The energy: simply intoxicating.

I began to recall the advice I had been given throughout the week. "Easy on the throttle to start." "Pin it and get tucked." "Make yourself very small and punch

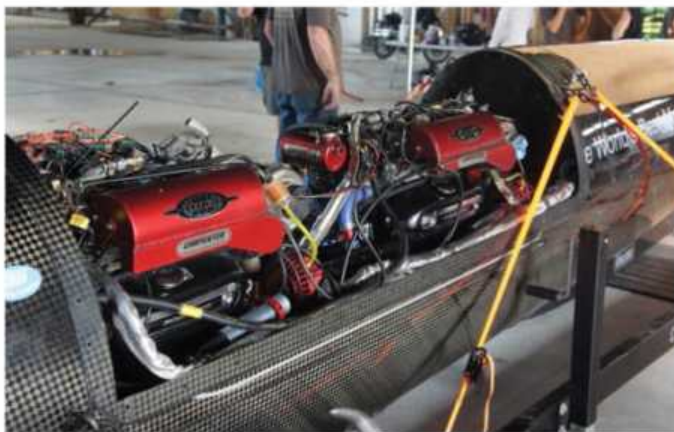




a tiny hole through the air.” “Don’t sit up before you are slowed.” “Never touch your brakes.”

I made a lot of promises in anticipation of running at Bonneville, to myself, to my family, to my friends, and co-workers at Triumph. I would take it easy, I would build up to speed throughout the week, I didn’t have anything to prove since it was my rookie year, and I would wear my protective prayer beads.

Finally, the flag dropped. There I was, racing against time. Fully tucked, throttle pinned, eyes forward, toes and fingers curled around the controls, knees gripping the tank. I had never been so focused. I had two miles to get up to speed. One mile in, I started to feel the pressure on my body. Almost two miles in, my helmet was pressed against my face with such force that it was restricting my breath. I tried to squeeze a little more out of the throttle and tuck in a little closer to the tank. My fingers and toes felt like they would be ripped off the controls. Suddenly, I started to feel an unsettling head shake from the bike; my heart was pounding. A quick peek down at the speedo revealed it was maxed out at 160 mph. The timed mile



was in sight. I just needed to maintain for one ... more ... mile. The head shake continued to taunt me. My instincts told me to ease off on the throttle, but my training suggested the opposite. Just then, a second set of flags indicated the end of the “flying mile.” Once I slowly began to scrape off speed, my body involuntarily released its loudest, most primal scream, a scream of pride and disbelief and holiness, and it was immediately swallowed up by the salt to be repurposed at a later time.

Days earlier ...

I arrived in Salt Lake City curious and green. Triumph Motorcycles had offered me an extraordinary opportunity to run the world’s largest displacement production bike on the Bonneville Salt Flats during the 10th annual BUB Speed Trials. I would pilot a 2300cc, 240 hp Carpenter Racing-equipped Rocket III Roadster in the 3000-M-AF class, outfitted with a slick car tire on the rear. The record in that class belonged to Jason DiSalvo at 174.292 mph, set the previous year. However, Triumph’s main focus this year would be on the Castrol Rocket: a gorgeous 3000cc, 1,000 hp, 25’-long Carbon Kevlar streamliner with a goal of 400 mph and racer Jason DiSalvo in the cockpit.

I had so many questions.

Had I prepared enough? I didn’t know much about land speed racing at the time. I read articles, I reached out

to others who had done it before, but there really wasn’t that much information out there about how to prepare and what to expect. My burning question was how do I train for it. So I created my own training program, and it didn’t involve riding motorcycles. I went back to my roots as an athlete and used what I knew. My regimen included playing tennis off a wall to improve reaction time and hand-eye coordination. Combat training at a mixed martial arts gym to work on stamina, upper body strength, and how to fall properly. Hiking to train at varying altitudes and to work on leg strengthening. Bikram yoga for bendability, core strength, and staying focused in extreme heat (105 F). I thought I had all of the bases covered, although, looking back, I should have worked on neck strength to accommodate for the wind force.

What do I pack? A big hat, a lot of sunscreen to protect from the rays that shoot up from the salt, burning chins and nostrils. Long sleeves, cool pants, sunglasses, and some wooden prayer beads gifted to me by a friend who asked that I wear them for protection during my runs.

Waking up at 4 am on Sunday wasn’t difficult at all. After a quick breakfast, I headed to the salt. My instructions were to take Interstate-80 until the road ends and the salt begins, then drive about five miles to the pits. Witnessing the sunrise while waiting in line to get on the salt is a solace everyone should know.

I thought I knew what to expect of the 40 square miles of the dried-up lake bed lined by mountains, but no words or pictures or movie could prepare me for what I saw, felt, and smelled by actually being there. The texture of the salt not only looked like snow, but it felt like snow crunching under my feet and even had a moisture to it.

The first order of business on Sunday morning was to line up for registration. The line was very long, and I would learn quickly that waiting isn’t only the biggest part of Bonneville, but it also happens to be one of the best parts of Bonneville. As it turns out, most of the intel I needed to know was told to me in that line by some very colorful, seasoned participants.

The next step was scrutineering (tech inspection) for bikes and gear. It took a few trips with my technicians to and from, but both the bike and gear passed after about six hours between waiting in line and making the required modifications to pass. Once the bike is cleared from tech, they put a line of nail polish on the gas cap so they'll know if it has been tampered with.

When you're ready to run, you head to staging. There's no order; line up when you want to run and run as many times as you want. So be there when the pits first open at 6 am to get a good place in line. Vehicles line up as early as 4 am. There are two tracks to run. The Mountain course (closest to the mountains) is five miles long with speeds timed between the second and third mile. Smaller displacement bikes and the "Run What Ya Brung" class race on the Mountain course. I witnessed a racer on a standup scooter set a new land speed record of 55 mph on that course. The International course is 11 miles long with speeds timed between the fifth and sixth mile. The International course accommodates large-displacement motorcycles like the streamliners aiming for up to 400 mph. You can choose to start at the zero-mile mark or the three-mile mark. I ran at the three-mile mark on the International course.

The wait in staging can be anywhere from 30 minutes to four hours, then you're released to ride to the next staging area near the course you're about to run. You could be there anywhere from one to six hours. You need support there. Your support person is your life source. They have your water, sunblock, snacks, umbrella, phone, camera, a car to sit in, etc. My supporter was my brother. He took his job very seriously, and I was grateful to have him by my side to share in this experience. Somehow, the time here goes by unnoticed. Every staging area is an opportunity to make a new friend, hear a great story, and learn some useful tips. Then, before you know it, you're next in line to head out to the starting cones.

The mile that counts is also called the "flying mile," marked by double flags stuffed in cones at the



start and finish. This is how you know you can begin to gradually slow and either make your way back to the pits or to a timing tent to ask for your time. If you think you set or broke a record, you need to go all the way back to impound and request a return run, which starts at mile eight (on the International course) and runs in the opposite direction. Both times are averaged to determine the final speed. To qualify for a record, a racer must exceed the current record by at least 0.001 mph.

One of the first things I had learned is to expect anywhere from 15 percent to 30 percent wheel spin because of the loss of traction on the salt. We were getting closer to 30 percent because of the tire choice.

Every day around 3 pm or 4 pm, a strong weather system would come through. Gray, ominous clouds would crowd out the sun, and high winds would send us all running to help secure tents and other objects that might take flight. Then almost as fast as it moved in, it was gone. Just a brief, friendly reminder from Mother Nature that she is almighty.

On Wednesday after I made the run (described earlier). Like an addict, I immediately rode back to staging to line up to run again. While waiting in line, I noticed the afternoon weather moving in on schedule. This time, the high winds were accompanied by an apocalyptic rain. People and machines scattered quickly. Most of the officials knew right away it was enough rain to cancel the event, but we were all hopeful that the salt would soak it up by morning.

The next day, we arrived at the salt and were greeted by a spectacular display of nature's elements working together to create an enormous mirror. The reflections off the water were spectacular and made for some of the most amazing and creative photos. The event, however, was canceled. I wouldn't be able to run again, and to say I was disappointed would be an understatement. There was unfinished business. I felt at a loss. I doubt any team or racer has ever left there feeling completely satisfied, and that's the hook. We're all just chasing time, and if time is infinite, so will be our pursuit.

I long to return to that place of freedom. To that uninhabitable land where gender, race, and age are irrelevant and where the only thing being judged is how quickly one moves through time and space.

Until next time, Bonneville. **M**

AUSTIN INVITATIONAL

INSPIRATION TO CREATE
WITH YOUR HANDS



pend some time in Austin, Texas, and it will immediately become clear that this is a special town that prides itself and works hard at its eclectic nature. Great food, incredible music, art of all types — you won't have to look hard to find it all. But what you might not know is that Austin has a thriving exotic motorcycle community that's every bit as unusual and outstanding as the town itself. So when

Revival Cycles, a local motorcycle business that regards itself as a cultural center for the Austin biking community, started The Handbuilt Motorcycle Show, Revival knew it had to be special as well.

The Handbuilt Show web site calls it the “most inclusive motorcycle event in the country,” but motorcycle builders might beg to differ. It's free to attend, with no admission at the door, just donations, if you please. But

to be included as an entrant, that's another story. The Revival staff knew that if they wanted to fuel a revolution, to inspire people to use their hands and create things truly unique, they had to set the bar high. MotoGP weekend in 2014 was the first Handbuilt Motorcycle Show.



By 2015, word was out that if you considered yourself a “builder,” a word not taken lightly in this crowd, you needed to be here and you had better show up with something good.

It wasn't all customs and specials. Some low-production, lovingly restored originals have made the cut as well. Over 100 motorcycles were invited, and if you were lucky enough to receive a coveted hand-burned leather invite in the mail, your motorcycle was beautifully photographed and then placed on display with individual lighting for each bike. The result was head-turning; you literally didn't know where to look first. Some machines are pure art, completely form over function. Others just the opposite, and there was everything in between. Motorcycles were everywhere you looked, even tied to beams overhead. The irony that much of the motivation for the show is to encourage a generation where few are being taught to do physical work, and that there is so much work to produce, isn't lost on me. Even the show itself was completely handcrafted.

The building where this all takes place is called the Fair Market building, just outside Austin's downtown. On most weekends, it's rented for parties or weddings, but it's just as perfect for a popup motorcycle museum, its ceremonial garden having even hosted an old-fashioned Wall of Death carnival show. Revived industrial space with lots of on-street parking, the endless stream of interesting bikes coming and going all weekend was equally part of the show.

Opportunities like this can make (or maybe even break) a builder still making his name. Some, like Alex Earle, who brought three stunning custom carbon fiber-clad Ducatis from California were looking for buyers and making contacts for parts, pieces, and ideas needed for future builds. Others, like Bryan Fuller, who had one of the most unusual entries in the building — a Triumph Speed Triple three-wheeler he built for specialty tool maker OTC — had little to prove. Fully established as a top builder (as well as the host of the TV show *Naked Speed*), he's ascended to the role of “personality.” But make no mistake, even Bryan wasn't phoning it in; his





Norton build Misty Green was and still is spectacular, a standout even in this crowd.

It's clear the Revival team has a big love for vintage motorcycles, in particular, ones that get ridden hard. Cannonball bikes, boardtrack racers, and anything old and still in use got respect. The best spot in the house for the second year in a row went to legendary California moto-artist Shinya Kimura: this time for his 100-year-old 1915 Indian, which he has competed on in all three coast-to-coast Cannonball runs. Or Steve Klein's iconic, orange Flying Merkel.

Another entry in a similar vein was Brittney Olsen's often-raced 1923 Harley-Davidson boardtrack racer, which made the trip to the show from South Dakota.

The variety of machines was nothing short of delightful. From Robert Clark's slammed scooter and Retrospeed's steampunk all the way to the entry no one could just walk by, the dazzling Hazan Motorworks supercharged Harley, this was art, and everyone knew when they saw it. Easy to imagine these motorcycles anywhere but a garage.

Which is not to imply these were all pedestal bikes. Just the opposite. There were plenty of get'er dones in the house with some serious speed machines on display as well — Team Obsolete brought the famous Dick

Mann G50 Matchless racer from New York. Confederate brought a X132 Hellcat Combat land speed racer record holder, with a top speed of 176.458 mph. There was the Lone Star 2, a serious-looking supercharged, 230 hp Motus with a 1.65-liter V4, and the DesmoPro C31, a dazzling gold metallflake Ducati built for the *Cafe Racer* TV show and more recently picked by "Ben" Bostrom of WSBK fame to ride in a challenge on *Naked Speed*.

And then there was Zeke DeZeeuw. It's possible all this was for him. Just 12 years old, he's the one guy in the room whose name everybody knows. Zeke and his dad, Patrick, built a 200cc Honda café racer a couple of years ago, a project that came about because Patrick didn't want Zeke to turn out like others in his generation with no interest in manual skills. Zeke was invited with the Honda race bike he built for *Naked Speed*, and spent the weekend taking advantage of Lincoln Electric's show sponsorship, learning to weld and posing for photos, generally impressing everybody around that he's on fire to hone his skills and become a builder.

If this show's message is about inspiring people to use their hands and create things truly unique, then Zeke is what happens when that works. Revival calls the people who love these machines motonerds, and this weekend, the King of them was Jeremy Cupp from LC Fabrications who took home the grand prize as the people's choice of favorite motorcycle at The Handbuilt Motorcycle Show 2015. His mating of a Buell Blast motor with a Ducati top end and Triumph transmission is impressive both mechanically and visually, and his reward is to find space in the trailer for a shiny new TIG welder for his shop in Virginia.

The Handbuilt Motorcycle Show delivered as promised. If you missed it, don't worry. The guys at Revival Cycles are already working on next year's show. **M**

SOURCES

The Handbuilt Motorcycle Show
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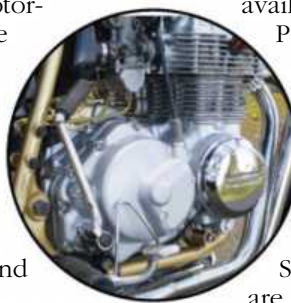
A HOMEBREWED CAFÉ RACER



he owner of the eye-popping Honda café racer spread out in the pages in front of you is Paul Bicker. He hails from a place named Malvern, in the United Kingdom's West Midlands. By trade, Paul tells us he's a "joiner." That left us scratching our heads. (We're obviously separated by a common language!) But Paul informs us a joiner is a tradesman who builds sash windows, doors, and staircases. Paul started 14 or so years ago as an apprentice (with the same company he works for today). What that means is Paul is pretty

good when it comes to working with his hands. The truth is, it wasn't a stretch to build a custom bike (and, by the way, while Paul is definitely mechanically inclined, this is his first-ever build). As the story goes, Paul wasn't exactly a novice with bikes, though. Paul says he's been into bikes for as long as he can remember. His older brother had a succession of motorcycles, so his interest in them started when he was young and has been riding for the better part of a decade. Paul mentions that he was put off by cars because of a motor vehicle accident (as a passenger) in his late teens. Then and there, he vowed that cars were out and motorcycles were it for him. According to Paul: "Sounds daft, I know. Anyway, I took my [motorcycle license] test and have never looked back."

Never looking back means our English pal has owned a pretty nice fleet of motorcycles over the years. Included in the mix: a 1987 Honda VFR 400R (the wicked, little 400cc V4 is a Euro thing, and it wasn't



available in North America — Paul absolutely loves it), 2005 Yamaha R6 (he bought it new for £5,000 on the road, but it was stolen with 7,500 miles on the clock, which absolutely gutted him at the time), and a 2007 Suzuki GSX-R600. Those are the past machines.

Currently, Paul owns an original 2002 Honda VTR SP2, which is a RC51 over here. This one is a Colin Edwards Laguna Seca replica, the





real deal done by the same people who did Colin's bikes for World Superbike), a 1982 Honda 650 Nighthawk, and the star of this story, the 1976 Honda CB400F.

When it came to the CB café racer, Paul really wanted to build a motorcycle. He also wanted a challenge, and he got one when he discovered the little in line four Honda. Honestly, it was a ratty, bargain basement machine, but the price was a mere £300 (roughly \$450), so he snapped it up. With the carcass safely home in his own garage, Paul

stripped it to the bone. Eventually, the frame and the swingarm were blasted and powdercoated (gold for the frame and black for the swingarm) by an outfit called Redditch Shotblasting. Paul detailed the original rims and hubs, but had them relaced. Paul wrapped the front wheel with a Bridgestone Battlax BT45F 90/90-18" tire, while the rear is a matching Battlax BT45R 110/90-18". The fork is a stock Honda part, rebuilt by Paul, but as you can see, there's an aftermarket steering damper fitted to it. Out back, the stock coil-over shocks were replaced with a pair of new components from Hagon. During the rebuild process, he adapted a Suzuki SV650 front caliper and master cylinder. Linking the two is a braided brake hose while the stock Honda drum remains out back. Rear set pegs and controls are actually stock Honda bits, too.

Upstairs, the handlebars were swapped for a set of 33mm clip-ons. Aside from the brake lever (which is a Suzuki SV item), the controls are all aftermarket replacement pieces. The “clocks” (that’s Brit for the speedo and tach) are new. Ditto with the wire harness. Paul used the stock headlight, but out back, the taillight is a custom 2” LED. That racy tail section you see was actually hand-

laid in fiberglass by our pal, the talented Mr. Bicker. Paul also fabbed the seat pan from fiberglass. The turn signals are from a big UK outfit called Bike It. (Plenty of the components found in the build come from the Bike It shelves.) The front fender is a seriously bobbled stock piece; it’s trimmed down to a mere 12” in length. While the gas tank is actually the stock Honda CB component, the license tag bracket was remounted on the swingarm by way of a bracket, which Paul built himself.

For grunt, Paul disassembled the stock overhead cam in line four and completely went through it. The top end

was treated to a Yoshimura big-bore kit. Displacement went from the stock 408cc to 466cc. The balance of the assembly was simply blueprint-ed. The carbs are stock Keihin, and they breathe through a factory air-box and air filter arrangement. The ignition system components (including the coils) are new replacement items. The exhaust, however, is an aftermarket 4-into-1 from a UK manufacturer by the name of Motad. Rare for the time is a six-speed gearbox. Honda is one of the first manufacturers to use one, and this 1976 model-year machine is no exception. Paul left it stock, but he went through the clutch setup, adding fresh plates.

Once the motorcycle was all done, Paul stripped it down again



and handed the tin and fiberglass pieces to a company called The Plastics Surgery in nearby Worcester, United Kingdom. As you can see in the photos, the various components were beautifully painted in basic black and trimmed in gold. To us, at least, it's very reminiscent of the scheme used by fellow Brit, the late Colin Chapman on his John Player Special Lotus F1 cars from the early-to mid-1970s. Very cool. And don't forget to check out the matching, era-correct open-face helmet.

Finally assembled, the motorcycle had a few short shakedown miles put on it before the UK's legendary winter struck (2014-15). With the bad weather out of the way, Paul is ready to ride the wheels off his little Honda. We're sure he will, too. But looking at the photos, it's hard to believe this café racer is a first-time build, and we can hardly wait to see his next one, when he gains more "experience"! One way or another though, Paul's homebrewed café racer is an absolute home run as far as we're concerned! **M**

TECH SPECS

OWNER/BUILDER Paul Bicker
HOME Malvern, West Midlands, UK
YEAR/MODEL 1976 Honda CB400F
TIME TO BUILD 2-1/2 years
COST TO BUILD £2,800 (\$4,200)
PAINTER Steve at The Plastics Surgery, Worcester, UK
POWDERCOATER Redditch Shotblasting Co. LTD, Redditch, UK

ENGINE/CHASSIS

DISPLACEMENT 466cc
PISTONS Yoshimura 54.5mm bore
EXHAUST Motad 4-into-1
FINAL DRIVE Chain
FRAME Semiduplex cradle
RAKE 63 degrees
FRONT SUSPENSION Telescopic, 4-1/2" travel
SWINGARM Custom-laid fiberglass

REAR SUSPENSION Hagon twin shock
FRONT WHEEL 36-spoke 1.60-18"
REAR WHEEL 36-spoke 1.85-18"
FRONT TIRE Bridgestone Battlax BT45F 90/90-18"
REAR TIRE Bridgestone Battlax BT45R 110/90-18"
FRONT BRAKE 1998 Suzuki SV650 caliper and master cylinder
FENDERS Stock, modified

ACCESSORIES

HEADLIGHT 7"
TAILLIGHT 2" LED
TURN SIGNALS Bike It Arrow, black
HANDLEBARS 33mm clip-ons
SEAT Fiberglass, fabricated by Paul Bicker
HAND CONTROLS Aftermarket, black
TAG BRACKET Fitted to swingarm



TIME TRAVELING

RIDING THROUGH MILLENNIA







f all the European countries to visit, Italy had always been at the top of my wish list. I have many loves that derive from Italy: food, wine, art, music, lovers ... all

the things that make my receptors come alive. So when my best riding buddy, Genevieve Schmitt, editor of WomenRidersNow.com, called to tell me that she'd be participating in Hear The Road Motorcycle Tours Italy Magical Italy tour, I signed right up.

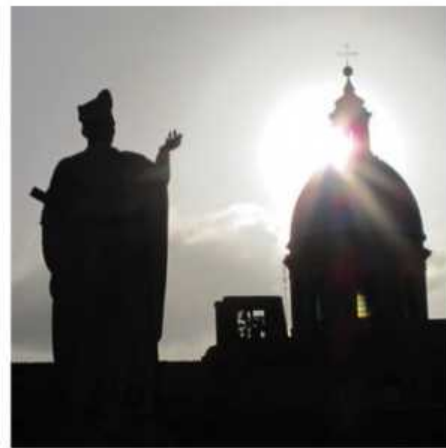
As a young artist, I developed a fascination for Italian Renaissance artist Michelangelo. In fact, I used to fill sketchpads trying to duplicate the arm and hand details in Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment*. I haven't picked up a pencil in years, but a visit to the Sistine Chapel to see those exquisite brushstrokes in person was still on my wish list. The eight-day tour was scheduled to begin and end in one of the world's oldest cultural and artist cities, Rome. So I tacked on extra time before the start of the ride to fit in a walking tour of the Vatican Museums, culminating at the Sistine Chapel, where *The Last Judgment* covers the ceiling.

Our host hotel in Rome, Hôtel Locarno Roma, is located on the edge of the *Tevere* (Tiber River). The easiest way to get around is on foot, and there are many shops, restaurants, and museums within walking distance. Dainese's largest retail sportswear and protective

gear store in Rome is also conveniently right next door. In fact, due to the crowded on-street parking, the motorcycles stayed in a parking garage several blocks away. Other early tour participants walked south to tour the Colosseum, whereas Genevieve and I headed west to *Città del Vaticano* (Vatican City). It was about 25 minutes to the guarded entrance, where we were promptly warned that Vatican law states that women must cover their knees and shoulders.

The Vatican Museums are comprised of 13 different museums, all connected in a nearly 4-1/2-mile maze of artfully decorated walls, halls, marble archways, courtyards, and rooms displaying sculptures, paintings, frescos, tapestries, and artifacts that date back to 1503. That's when Pope Julius II started collecting sculptures and placed them in what's now the museum's Cortile Ottagono. Thus began a succession of Popes who started collections and commissioning artists to open the museums and galleries to the public in order to promote art and culture (with a religious agenda).

Inside, we shuffled shoulder to shoulder with hordes of tourists — many were wearing headphones following a flag-wielding tour guide. This almost ruined the awe-inspiring experience of being completely surrounded by great works from many millenniums ago. But even the smallest details that covered the walls from floor to ceiling had me yearning for



Hear The Road
Motorcycle Tours
Italy Magical Italy
leaders and riders
pose against the
Tuscan landscape.





more time to spend gazing and learning about each of the works. By the time we got to the Sistine Chapel, we'd been on our feet for several hours and had enough of being human-cattle-herded. You're shushed upon entry to the Chapel, warned that photography isn't permitted, and reminded of this every few minutes by a prerecorded announcement. I did my best to take in the awesome paintings under these circumstances and was elated from the entire experience.

Walking back to the hotel, we noticed that almost everyone, with an exception of a tourist or two, was slender. I imagine that's because of the amount of physical exercise involved in urban living. Walking up and down cobblestone streets and marble steps required to get around Italy is better than a gym membership. Later, we'd experience the next level of fitness in Siena's steeply sloped alleys.

Because we'd done so much walking, I felt justified in a bit of indulgence at our tour group welcome dinner. Trattoria Lilli is located in the oldest section of the city, a 10-minute walk from Hôtel Locarno Roma, and offers old-world charm and wonderful fare. Our large group of 13 filled most of the restaurant, and Hear the Road founder and tour leader, Enrico Grassi, seemed deter-



Wear your walking shoes, cover your shoulders and knees, and try to get to the Vatican Museums as soon as they open to avoid crowds.



Tour participant Cindy Dehner with the best tiramisu any of us have ever tasted.



mined that we taste the best of Italy in that one dinner, ordering course after course for the table to share. After several hours, many bottles of wine, and a taste of the best — by far — tiramisu I've ever had, we all bonded. A highlight of any organized tour is the camaraderie and new friendships made along the way. When the volume of our excited, tipsy conversations had gone beyond the acceptable decibel

level, it was time to head back to the hotel and rest for the first day of riding.

Genevieve and I had acquired BMW F 800 R press motorcycles for the tour, while the other riders rented from Enrico's rental sources. Our group consisted of a variety of BMWs, a Ducati, a Moto Guzzi, and several Harley-Davidsons. It's worth noting that the ladies who rented the Harleys from Harley-Davidson Store Roma were unsatisfied with the rental terms and conditions and most were sorry



CHOOSE THE RIGHT BIKE

If you're riding solo and have a chase truck carrying your luggage like we did, there's no reason to rent a large touring motorcycle in Italy.

The ancient cities often have narrow stone streets and tight, uphill turns. Parking is usually pretty sketchy, and there's a lot of physical labor involved in turning the motorcycles around. Out in the country, the roads are well-maintained, but the curves can get pretty tight, too, and unless you're a confident, experienced rider, I can't stress enough how much more fun you'll have on a light, sporty bike. BMW's F 800 R was the perfect motorcycle for this trip. I used the Softbag 3 (see review on page 75) for my camera gear and daily necessities, while the Hear The Road chase truck hauled all my luggage. The F 800 R was easy to maneuver in parking lots and the occasional gravel road, offered enough power to make tight twisties fun, and was comfortable for the all-day, nonhighway riding we did on this tour.



that they hadn't chosen lighter, sportier bikes.

Starting the tour on unfamiliar bikes in a dark, city parking garage was challenging. In Italy, the riding is on the right side of the road like in the US, but scooters and motorcycles do whatever they need to do to pass cars. While we didn't do it, riding in the center lane between both sides of traffic is common in the city. It gets really exciting when there's a rider in the center lane in each direction. You need to be on your game and be prepared to pass or be passed at any given moment.

Unscathed, we made our way out of the city to Italy's version of suburbia, but not without learning about the fine art of the traffic circle. There aren't many traffic lights in this part of Italy, and traffic circles keep things moving, but created a challenge for our large group to stay together.

Sticking to country roads, the ride north from Rome to Orvieto, where



we stayed overnight at the outstanding Altarocca Wine Resort, was fantastic. With a mix of terrain, from long sweepers with great country scenery to ancient towns with castles and archways, the ride was all but boring. We wound our way, single file, through the first of many narrow, ancient village alleys and came to our first stop in the center of Civita Castellana for an espresso break. Parking our bikes on the smooth, worn stones laid centuries ago, I felt transported back in time. Our large group of mostly women riders obviously made a scene everywhere we went because onlookers, male and female, young and old would stop, point, and stare at us.

By lunchtime, we arrived at Civita di Bagnoregio, a village founded by the Etruscans and built on volcanic rock about 2,500 years ago. As the village's outer edges continually eroded and buildings were lost to the valley below, the Bishop and municipal

government were forced to move to Bagnoregio in the 17th century. Today, Civita is called "the dying city," as it continues to crumble and has only six residents, ironically none of them Italian. It's only accessible for a small fee via a long, steep pedestrian bridge high above the valley.

The view of Civita is truly one of the most incredible sights I've ever seen and the village itself is a photographer's playground and full of life, with well-cared-for shops, restaurants, and church in the center courtyard. The afternoon we visited, the sun was shining between thick clouds and the threat of rain created dramatic lighting effects.

The crescendo of the day's ride, however, was when a huge rainbow opened up like an umbrella over the Orvieto skyline, separating the sunny landscape below it from the dark clouds above it. The scene reminded me of the Emerald City from *The Wizard of Oz*.

When we arrived at our first-class accommodations at



The reddish volcanic rock that buildings in Civita are built from is rich in texture and color, and the spring flowers were in full bloom when we visited.



Podere la Strega has two formal dining areas: one inside (left) and one outside (right). Both feature Letizia Nuti's wonderful cooking, place settings, and an amazing skyline view of Siena.



We enjoyed relaxing with a glass of Tuscan wine in the open air patio after each ride.

the Altarocca Wine Resort, the rainbow was still hanging in the dramatic stormy sky. I took in the view of the setting sun over the rolling hills of cypress trees and well-groomed vineyard from one of the resort's outdoor pools while sipping *vino* with some of

my new friends. Every painting I'd ever seen of the Tuscan landscape seemed to be captured in this gorgeous place. Later, we enjoyed the seemingly endless day of sensory overload with a wine tasting and pairing served at the resort's onsite restaurant. We all agreed that just one night in this luxury wasn't enough.

The dramatic and beautiful landscapes continued the next day, as we rode from Orvieto to Siena, stopping in another ancient city, Città della Pieve, for an outdoor

lunch. Then we put on more miles of amazing views, windy roads, and faraway cities that look like chess pieces in the distance. Stopping again in Pienza, a lively Renaissance-era town, I filled more of my senses by experiencing my first Italian gelato. Ah, the indulgence!

We were exuberated when we arrived at Podere la Strega. The inn's owner, Letizia Nuti, had prepared us a wonderful meal that we enjoyed in the 16th-century farmhouse's indoor dining room with a wonderful view of Sienna. In Letizia's family for 80 years, the farmhouse was converted into an eight-room bed and breakfast five years ago. The original building, a chapel, still exists on the property as does a private villa that can be rented by the week.

Our group took over the bed and breakfast for the next several days and we relished in Letizia's amazing culinary skills. Breakfasts included fresh scrambled eggs, pancetta, pastries, fruit, and homemade jams pre-



The Tuscan landscape is dotted with tall, pointed cypress trees, vineyards, and villages that have been around for millennia.

pared and served in the gorgeous outdoor dining area. Letizia's garden produces the herbs, fruit, and vegetables she uses in her cooking, and the flowers growing along the property were both fragrant and colorful and provided table settings that are worthy of a magazine shoot. The property's endless pool was a bit chilly in May, but viewing the city skyline from its vantage point was yet another highlight.

While almost everyone toured Siena on our rest day, Bill Kneigge from US-based Blue Strada Tours had been hired to be our chase rider, and was itching to wring out the BMW R 1200 R he'd rented. He knew the area from previous tours and offered to lead me and another sporty rider to the small medieval village of Montefollonico. The three of us enjoyed miles of rollercoaster-like twisties while skirting most of the nasty rain clouds that threatened our fun. We just made it to the village and into Relais La Costa when the sky opened up with a vengeance.

Bill surprised his friend, the owner, who opened up the restaurant kitchen and prepared us sandwiches while we waited out the storm in the dark, stone fortress. This place felt old — really old — and, in fact, stone tools have been discovered here that date back to the Neanderthals! La Costa had been a 13th-century farm and still maintains its ancient characteristics while offering upscale accommodations and services. It was a majestic place to sit quietly while the thunder and lightning held us hostage for a couple hours.

Riding by day meant I'd have to explore Siena during the evening. The steep, narrow alleys of Siena reminded me that I hadn't yet heard any accordions playing the sounds of romance. But at Piazza del Campo, there was love in the air. With no blade of grass to be found in the city, the Piazza is Siena's version of Central Park. Young couples and groups are spread out on the brick, playing guitar, singing, laughing, and drinking wine. Surrounded by ancient churches and busy restaurants, it seems an odd place to relax, but the air in the Piazza feels magical and alive.

The next few days were spent riding from Siena, visiting more ancient sights, such as the Abbey of San

Galgano. The first Gothic church in Tuscany, it was built between 1218 and 1288 by Cistercian monks. In 1786, lightning struck the bell tower, which collapsed onto the roof of the abbey, and the church was deconsecrated — no longer used for religious purposes — in 1789.

Up the hill from the abbey is a round chapel, Cappella di Monte Siepi, which was built in 1185 to honor Saint Galgano. Born in 1148, Galgano was a knight who was always in trouble. After being enlightened, he renounced his sins to God, declaring that he would live as a hermit and never kill again. The legend says that he drew his sword and drove it deep into the bedrock. He then took up residence there, becoming a monk, and living a life of poverty. The sword in the rock is the shrine's centerpiece, and sitting in one of the pews quietly, you feel energy all around as a low chant resonates from the walls and domed ceiling.

On the final ride day, returning to Rome from Siena, I realized that you can actually become accustomed to being amongst castles and villages that are thousands of years old. Genevieve and I joked at one point, saying "Oh, look. It's just another run-of-the-mill castle." But, honestly, there's much to respect and learn from about the stone that Italy was built from, standing throughout the millennia. **M**



The Abbey of San Galgano is definitely worth visiting — especially on an overcast day, when you may even get the place to yourself.



Hear The Road's Italy tours and Blue Strada Tours provide motorcycle rentals, an itinerary, four-star hotel accommodations that are family-run, and experienced guides. There are still some spots available to join Enrico on Hear The Road's 11-day tour of the Amalfi Coast and Southern Italy (Oct 9-19). Custom motorcycle tours are also available from Hear The Road Italy Tours and Blue Strada Tours.



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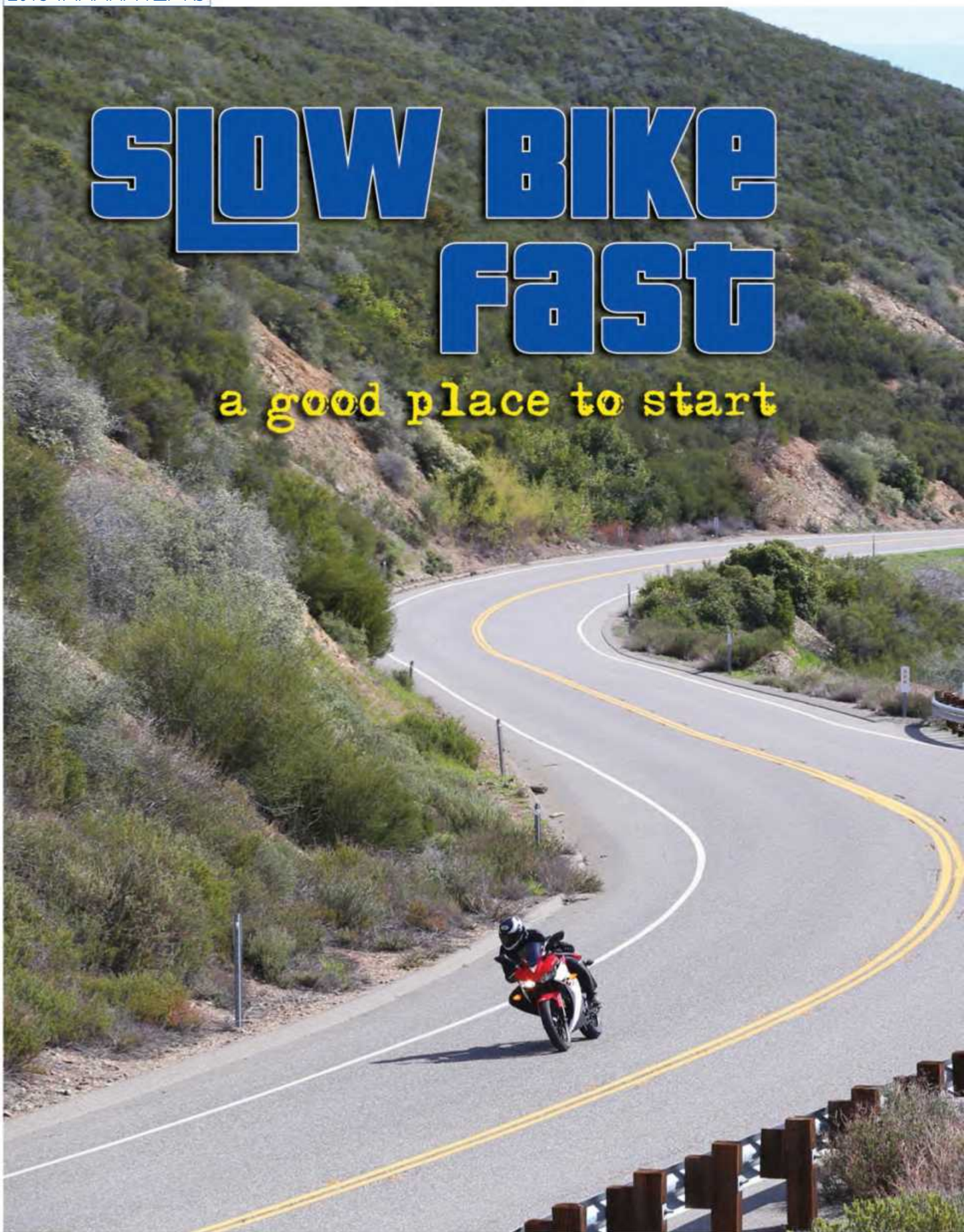
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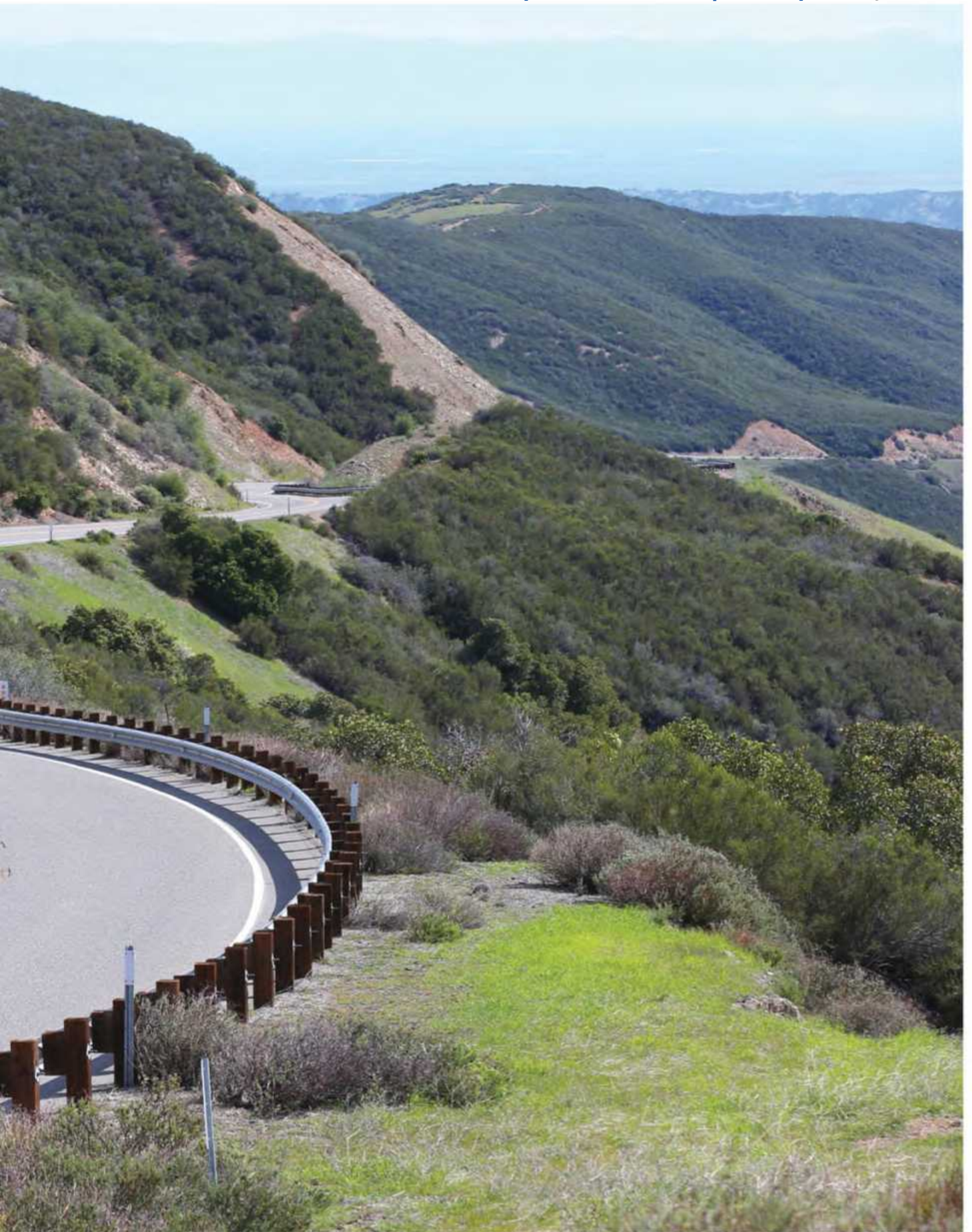
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SLOW BIKE Fast

a good place to start





A

s the saying goes, it's better to ride a slow bike fast than a fast bike slow, to which I say "Yeah, but you can also ride a fast bike fast, which is the best of all, right?" Well, sure ... in theory. Maybe you have a 12-turn MotoGP

track in your back 40. If that's the case, please stop reading this and invite me to live with you. I'm small, don't take up much room, and require very little food. Call in care of this magazine.

For everybody else, you don't have access to a controlled riding environment, and even if you do, you (like me) probably lack the skill to fully utilize the capabilities of today's 200-plus hp superbikes that any schlub with a 700-plus FICO can ride off the showroom floor. If you can push a BMW S1000RR to its limits — and remember, it's a motorcycle designed for God-like riders to win world-class races — you should be writing this story, not me. Yes, for the rest of us, riding a fast bike slow is the only way to really explore the limits of a motorcycle without risking a long bout of eating hospital food.

How slow? Well, that depends on your abilities.

You may consider a 600cc supersport like a Yamaha R6 or a Kawasaki ZX-6R, a perfect starter bike, or think a thick-waisted, middleweight like Honda's CB500F is appropriate. My opinion is a "slow" motorcycle makes less than 40 hp and weighs under 390 pounds gassed up, yet still has the capability of hanging with whomever riding whatever at ... advisable ... speeds on public roads.

Furthermore, I'll tell you there's no substitute for riding a lightweight single or twin as fast as you can on a racetrack. The learning curve is steep — you'll go far faster than you thought you could with such wispy power — and it's fun to surprise riders on bigger bikes, passing them on the inside, outside, on the brakes, or pretty much wherever. You see, while big bikes and little bikes all demand and deserve a certain level of respect





to keep them from flicking you off like a booger, the little ones seem to have a much better sense of humor.

In a few words: little bikes are hilarious.

For decades, the benchmark of sportbike slapstick was Kawasaki's brilliant Ninja 250R, available unchanged from 1988 to 2007. Big Green got away with it because there was no competition to speak of, and it was a best-selling product. It was light, had a low seat, looked like a 600 to the untrained eye, and it was cheap and fast enough to propel you to a honest 100-ish mph. Updates in 2008 and then '13 (when it was stroked to 300cc and gained a lot more power) kept it atop the heap, which, by that point, included Honda's fun-but-anemic CBR250R.

"Hey!" exclaimed Yamaha buyers. "How come we can't get an entry-level sportbike?"

"You do!" said Yamaha. "We have a 600cc four with a low seat that only weighs 480 pounds! Just look at these graphics — so sporty! Hello? Hello?! Is anyone there?!"

After ignoring the truly entry-level sportbike market for years, the com-

pany caved and brought in a bored-out version of the Asian-market YZF-R25. Why the change of heart? Over the last few years, the market for fully faired, high-performance supersport models and lower-spec, less-expensive sport models has "inverted," according to Yamaha Product Planner Derek Brooks, with the sport models now claiming 64 percent of the total market, up from just 41 percent in 2010. Yamaha realized it was "lacking a pure beginner-type" model and wanted something that would "introduce riders to the R series," as Derek elaborated, a model that "would grow with you" as a new rider's abilities and comfort levels matured.

To do that, Yamaha had to balance performance with user friendliness and price. Enter the 2015 Yamaha YZF-R3.

The powerplant is an eight-valve, DOHC, liquid-cooled parallel twin that gets its 320.6cc of displacement

The R3's simple brakes are inexpensive but do the job, on the street or track.





via a 68mm bore and 44.1mm stroke, notable because it has almost the same bore/stroke ratio (1.54mm) as a YZF-R6; the Ninja can only boast 1.26mm. The peaky power of such an over-square engine is moderated by a relatively mild 11.2:1 compression ratio. Fuel goes to the engine through 12-hole 32mm throttle bodies, and there's a progressively shaped pulley as well as an extra-tall first gear to help smooth out low-speed throttle response — great for new riders. A single-axis balance shaft smoothes out high-rpm vibes. The 180-degree crank is a departure from Yamaha's crossplane engines on other sporty models. There's no mention of horsepower in the press materials, but when pressed, most of Yamaha's peeps admit it's probably a few more ponies than the Kawi and a lot spicier than Honda's CBR300R.

The chassis is also a balance of sportiness and price consciousness. The diamond-style tube steel frame uses the engine as a stressed member — not high tech, but it does keep the weight and price down.

The steel swingarm is extra long to minimize wheel travel and comes equipped with lugs for a paddock stand. The front KYB fork is a nonadjustable 41mm damper rod unit — beefy for this class — and the rear KYB shock is seven-way adjustable for preload with no linkage. The brakes are Akebono (yeah, I never heard of them, either) two-piston caliper in front with a single-piston rear caliper. Its tires are bias-ply, special model-specific Michelin Pilot Streets, 110/70-17" in front and 140/70-17" in back. There are 54.3" between the contact patches, and that's 1/4" longer than the R6. The claimed wet weight is 368 pounds with the 3.7-gallon tank topped off.

Comfort, styling, and convenience features are important in this class, as most owners will never see a race-track. The seat is low (30.7") and the clip-ons are mounted above the triple clamp. The instrumentation is pretty comprehensive for this class: trip and mpg meters, a gear indicator, an adjustable shift light, and a clock and fuel gauge. Dual headlights, 10-spoke wheels, and modern R-styled bodywork make the R3 look much bigger than it is. MSRP for the US is \$4,990, over \$300 less than the Ninja and \$9 cheaper than the single-cylinder Honda. There's no ABS option — baffling, considering it's available in other markets.

The track is a great place to push any motorcycle's limits, but the average rider is far more likely to find the R3's limits than a bigger machine's.



I was expecting a light, user-friendly and fun experience on public roads, and I got it. The press-ride route was a 100-plus mile excursion, including some interstate highway, through some small towns, and then to twisty two-lane mountain roads that took us up over 3,000'. It was a half-day affair, but the R3's seating position is kind to my bones, and the seat padding is equally kind to my skinny tush. It's not a touring bike, but no sportbike is. And, compared to other sportbikes, the R3 is as good (or maybe even better) a place as any to spend the day, thanks to its generous legroom and slightly leaned-forward riding position.

It's also very capable in the twisty stuff. I found a suspension that's up to the task of moderate-to-brisk speeds on bumpy pavement, a motor that can rocket you to a solidly illegal pace as well as cruise at 80-plus mph, and a bike with light, easy handling. The brakes

are nothing special, but I didn't miss ABS, since it doesn't really rain in California anymore.

The racetrack is where you can't hide a motorcycle's flaws, and I didn't find many, seeing as I rode on the new western portion of Thunderhill Raceway Park in Willows, California. Power is plentiful — enough to see three digits on the speedo, and the clutch and gearbox are light and easy-to-use. I'm pleased that the nothing-special brakes do the job with a single finger, partly thanks to the bike's low speed and light weight. And the R3's well-calibrated suspension and long

Wind protection looks paltry, but it's as good as you'll find on most sportbikes, regardless of size.



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2015 YAMAHA YZF-R3	
LIST PRICE	\$4,990
ENGINE	Liquid-cooled, parallel-twin
VALVETRAIN	DOHC, four valves per cylinder
DISPLACEMENT	321 cc
BORE X STROKE	68mm x 44.1mm
COMPRESSION RATIO	11.2:1
FUEL SYSTEM	EFI
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed
FINAL DRIVE	Chain
FRONT SUSPENSION	41mm, KYB telescopic fork, 5.1" of travel
REAR SUSPENSION	KYB single shock, 4.9" of travel
FRONT TIRE	Michelin Pilot Street 110/70-17"/M/C 54H
REAR TIRE	Michelin Pilot Street 140/70-17"/M/C 66H
FRONT BRAKE	Akebono two-piston caliper; 298mm disc
REAR BRAKE	Akebono single-piston caliper; 220mm disc
OVERALL LENGTH	82.3"
WHEELBASE	54.3"
RAKE/TRAIL	25 degrees/3.7"
SEAT HEIGHT	30.7"
FUEL CAPACITY	3.7 gallons
AVERAGE MPG	56 mpg
WET WEIGHT	368 pounds
WARRANTY	One-year limited factory
2015 COLORS	Raven, Team Yamaha Blue/Matte Silver, Rapid Red

wheelbase make it feel much like a bigger sportbike — just without the distraction of too much power. The linkage-less rear shock feels controlled and well damped, but keep in mind that the smooth pavement of Thunderhill Raceway Park might be some of the freshest in the country. It's also pretty winding, more like a mountain road than racetrack, offering the sides of the tires a workout. The straights are short, short enough to mostly negate a bigger motorcycle's power advantage. That's where the R3 feels like a racer, thanks to its sub-400-pound weight and short wheelbase. But the motor, despite making good top-end power, also has good bottom and midrange response, making gear selection less important than you'd think, but still important enough to require technique and skill to get the best lap times.

Technique and skill. Those are what you need to go fast on any motorcycle, not just small ones. The R3 provides a neutral, stable platform to learn on whatever level of riding you possess. And it's the learning that's fun — knowing you get smoother, faster, and safer with each lap.

That neutral feel positions the

entry-level R3 appropriately compared to its larger stablemates like Yamaha's R6, with its take-no-prisoners focus, or the R1, with all that power and electronic capability. I recently rode a mostly stock Ninja 300 on the racetrack, and that bike, though slower and a bit heavier, feels more sorted and comfortable at the limits. KTM's lineup, which I haven't experienced, is, for the most part, faster, but perhaps not as good for everyday riding.

The R3 has some minuses, and what motorcycle doesn't? A little slow, a little bland (but it comes in Raven, Team Yamaha Blue/Matte Silver, or Rapid Red), and it's a little wheezy at illegal speeds. Its lack of ABS is also a serious disadvantage, a deal breaker if I were looking for a daily rider.

These minuses are buried by an avalanche of pluses. Yamaha's YZF-R3, at a Hamilton less than its competition, is a good bargain and even a better motorcycle. For an entry-level sportbike buyer, or even an experienced rider looking to boost riding skills to the next level, it's remarkably capable, and really all you need. The handling is sharp and predictable, suspension is sorted, and the motor is efficient, reliable (with 26,600-mile valve-check intervals), and plenty powerful. Looking to ride a slow bike fast? This may be the fastest slow bike on the market and a good stop before you try to ride a fast bike ... fast. **M**

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IN LOVING MEMORY

A RACER'S MEMOIRS THROUGH FINE ART

SOME THINGS ARE JUST BETTER LEFT UNSAID. Like trying to define the purpose or meaning of a particular art piece. And yet, from this writer's perspective, the art that generates the most emphatically resonant reactions are ones that present a familiar idea in an unfamiliar way or by doing just the opposite: juxtaposing unrelated thoughts so that they seem almost inherently related outside of their momentarily fused state.

Or maybe the best art just shows it how it is.

It just so happens that the art of the late David DeLong, an avid racer, accomplishes all three. For nonracers like myself, David's work presents a somewhat familiar experience (from watching) presented unfamiliarly. For actual racers, while the scenes or ideas are all part of racing culture, veterans of the circuit connect with David's pieces more profoundly due to the way he expresses these familiarities, which are familiar, but are sometimes overlooked even by racers, augmenting their connection with the art all the more.

Motorcycling, in general, can muster the urge to express the riding experience beyond the saddle and revving engine. But trying to emulate racing requires a little extra push, just like the sport itself.

On a universal level, the racetrack is home to intense skills and, as such, has captured the respect of enthusiasts and nonenthusiasts alike, finding its respective niche in the sport realm while becoming permanently ensconced in the overall culture of motorcycling. For racers, the track is a repository of emotions, exhilaration being one of them, even trepidation, which has the capability of transforming into unique sketches, paintings, and even structures.

It's only when the racer puts down the kickstand and sits in front of an easel that he can finally take on the passive role of an artist, joining the cheering spectators from the bleachers. For David, he took on these aggressive experiences, went into his studio, and painted, ostensibly circumventing these aggressive moments entirely, sometimes by shrewdly scrutinizing the people (and by people, I mean not just the racers, but those parts of the overall culture like the crowd and vendors), and through them, depicting scenes on the track, off in the crowd or

viewing the corresponding expo, or, even further still, a quiet reverie of a Parilla 175cc cylinder head on a shelf. And seeing as racing just so happens to be quite an aggressive sport, this oscillation into tranquility makes it all the more fascinating.

In remembering her husband, David's wife, Harriett recalls that David was "constantly in search for one extra rpm, one less second on



lap time," and that quest, while generating more speed on the circuit, also extended into the art realm. What I find amazing is that David's art was world-renowned before his passing. In addition to winning various awards including the J. Wallace

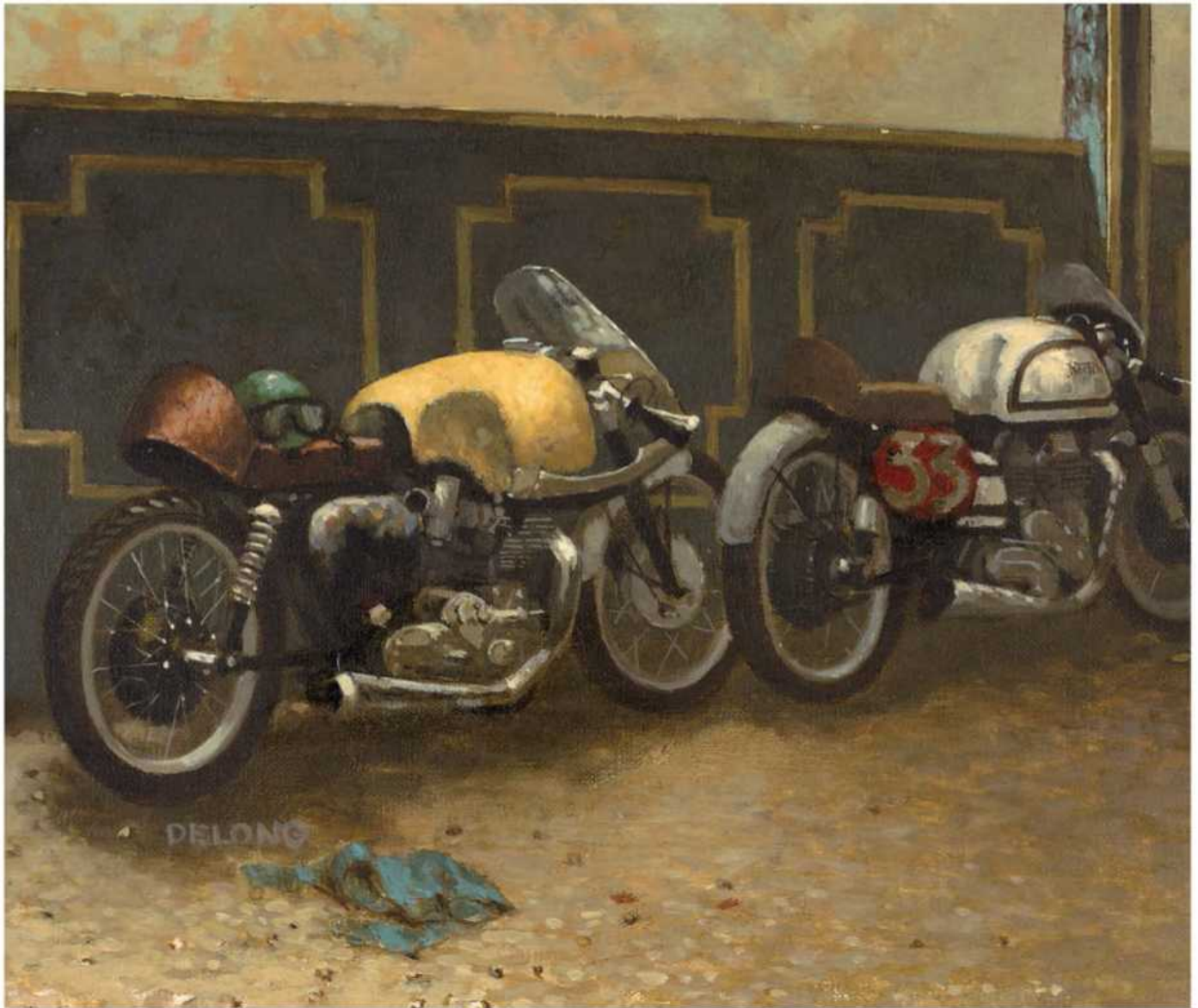


Truman Prize from the National Academy of Design of New York in 1966, many galleries have featured his work as a solo exhibitor (at least seven) from 1959 to 1998, one of which was *Get Your Motor Running* in 1998. David also juried for and contributed to 10-plus art exhibits. Since David's passing on December 18, 2001, his work continues to receive critical acclaim at various locations. David DeLong: *Passages* in 2006 (which went hand in hand with the publishing of the eponymous book) at Telfair Museum of Art, *Figuratively Speaking* in 2012 at Indigo Sky Community Gallery, *Life in the Fast Lane* in 2012-13 at Polasek Museum, *2 Wheels + Motor* at the AMA Motorcycle Museum (Motorcycle April/May), and, most recently, at the National Motorcycle Museum.

Rather than interpreting the two-wheeled machine and art as disparate objects, David viewed the

two-wheeled machine through an artistic lens, which later gave way to an interesting philosophy where he saw the motorcycle as "a metaphor for life and art, exacting the same amounts of control and discipline," and it's clear from those who knew him, that he followed this view with tenacity. Of course, this outlook wasn't just confined to his studio; it flowed into everything David pursued, both on the saddle — whether it was racing at Marlboro Motor Raceway, Bridgehampton Raceway, Summit Point Motorsports Park, Pocono, Roebling Road Raceway, the Daytona International Speedway, or beyond — and off. Many of David's adversaries, some whose status as an opponent might have evolved to the title of arch nemeses at one time, all recall David fondly, remembering how easily David figuratively switched gears, from the track to the canvas, or how David even found ways of combining the two. Former owner and team principal of a MotoGP team, Bob MacLean, who met and first competed with David in the mid-1960s astride 500cc Manx Nortons, referred to David as a Jack Kerouac kind of character during our interview. Bob interprets David's driving force behind his life pursuit as a "hot button," which, during a race, was getting the gearing in his motorcycle just right. Bob later illustrated the symbiotic relationship between the mechanical and artistic sides of David's life from David's perspective, saying "The track presented a prob-

*Wet Paddock, 1958,
oil on canvas,
28" x 48".*



Pier at Ramsey, 1958, oil on canvas, 10" x 12". Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Locovozzi.

lem. Here is how you solved a problem. I need so many rpms at such and such a place," Bob explains. "I think it was just like doing an etching, an exercise in getting the best possible result," Dr. Dan Levine, an art historian who taught at the Savannah College of Art and Design, met David on Roebing Road Raceway. Dan sees what Bob had called David's workman-like mentality as "fastidious." In continuing to describe David's obsequious attention to record taking, Dan noted that David's bike data (which he created when he was building and tweaking his race bikes) usually included an artistic side: drawings. "He was one of those people who always thought, as good as those Japanese engineers were, he could make it better."

For some of the racers I spoke to, articulating David's interest beyond the nuts and bolts was either restrained — more monosyllabic (like most of us) — or more involved, conveying an added interest in David's marriage between the machine and brush. Dan, being an art professor, spoke with David "a great deal" during their friendship about the world of fine art. Bob recalled visiting David's home and being aware of the material David had

been working on at the time "all piled up" in his house, also remembering motorcycle components like a cylinder head sitting on an easel somewhere in David's studio.

Meanwhile, other racers like Rusty Bigley, who first met and competed with David at Bridgehampton Raceway, only shared times when he would go up to David's house to help him out with his bikes. Then, there were those like David Roper who were completely unaware that David DeLong was even an artist when he was still alive. "He was another racer," Roper says. "What was interesting was that a lot of the racers had dual lives, and on one, it's the racetrack and on the other, for David, apparently it was art." In fact, Roper only connected with David's

wife, Harriett, after David's passing. It was during his friendship with Harriett when Roper realized that David had done a work entitled Roper, where Roper is depicted in the piece. Roper, who still races — something he aspires to do like David, who raced until his death at age 70 — was part of Team Obsolete when he first competed against David. Roper later recalled that the team's creator, Rob Iannucci, had one of David's bikes at one point, which Roper said was quite possibly how he might have met David.

David graduated from Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) in 1958, where he first ventured into American realism, and David took part in his first race at Harewood in 1956. This race was undoubtedly the spark that pushed his work into the limelight and, in turn, became the catalyst between art and motorcycling, with pieces like the pen and ink piece Two Bikers (1957) and, in the same year, the pen and sepia ink and wash painting Untitled (Five Riders) soon surfacing. These were later followed by pieces inspired more by his classical training in realism: Wet Paddock (1958) and Fallen Rider (1958).

Much like how David changed motorcycles throughout his racing career — beginning with a 500cc BMW he brought back from Germany in 1955 and then, after the 1956 race at Harewood, a Parilla 175cc in late 1958-59, Aermacchis and a Manx Norton (1960s), then, after racing a friend's Yamaha TZ250, a TZ750 in 1978 and, in 1983, what everyone remembers as David's "beloved" Yamaha TZ350, a vintage Ducati 450 in 1989, Ducati 450 in 1990, TZ350G in 1991, and then a RS Honda 125 in 2000-01 — David's subject matter in his paintings and what can be deciphered as an almost obsession with each consecutive bike he rode also changed in his art, capturing the machines he raced and wrenched, as per Harriett, "in various states of construction and destruction." More importantly, David also began to implement new styles into his work each time he raced on a different motorcycle or competed in a different racetrack, from the realism paintings to fiberglass structures and relics in the 1960s to etchings, which



he learned in 1979 at the New Jersey Council for the Arts. (Side note: David's etchings involved a traditional graphic arts technique, intaglio, to make original prints.)

But most of all, the main deciding factor in where David raced, which in turn affected what motorcycle he rode and how he depicted said motorcycle in his work, was all contingent on where David lived, and he and Harriett moved quite a bit. Each move signified an aesthetic shift in his art, especially when David went from living in New Jersey to Washington DC in the 1980s. Moving to DC coincidentally placed David in an environment where he was surrounded by classical architecture, impelling David to render them in most of his pieces. When he and his wife moved again, this time to Savannah, Georgia, in 1994, this need to depict vistas was only amplified by the sheer magnitude of the Daytona track just a few hours to the south.

David's inspiration of the sprawling vistas, realism, and awe can be easily construed from his 1995 Daytona Grandstand painting. A stark contrast, the oil painting Wet Paddock, is an example of David once again nodding to and, therefore, being influenced by the immensity of a scene. While the characters and bikes are in the foreground, they have been pushed to the side, allowing the grandness of the area to almost engulf the racers and their steeds. In Untitled (Privateer), an unfinished work, the watercolor depicts a lone rider taking on the rigorous Daytona racetrack, an image which successfully conveys a feeling of isolation.

Incidentally, the latter pieces, Wet Paddock and Untitled (Privateer), exemplify an idea presented earlier on in this story: familiar experiences presented unfamiliarly. Both works include moments that, for those who have not raced on and therefore haven't been shaped by the circuit, can easily be missed or passed by, noting more on the immediate action. This underlines the importance of the use of subtlety in David's work, in what almost reminds me of a secret handshake between

*Van with Bike
(Preparation),
1986-87, etching/
photoetching,
18" x 24".*



Harleys At City Market, 2001, conte crayon and oil on canvas, 14" x 16", (unfinished/unsigned).

racers. Dan summarizes this idea: "He did a lot of fine details ... not necessarily the most dramatic events but the kind of thing where someone who is really intimate with the subject can really understand," he says. "It was the sort of thing that people involved in it would really understand, would recognize, not the kind of thing necessarily that would be what someone who is not involved in racing would immediately think of."

While racers like Rusty who sum up David's art as being mainly inspired by racing, others like Bob were more familiar with David's myriad of other styles. "There would be a whole series of etchings of some with racing scenes and some without," he begins, "but each of these art disciplines he did, it was like he had gotten a new bike. And he went through it and learned all about it, how it worked, how you would make it function properly." Dan noted David's virtuosity by explaining it in terms of education, referring to David's experience as classical training. "Now, technically, the difference in the mediums, such as something precise as an etching and something as fluid and loose as water colors ... that's covering a very broad range of skills. A still life painting has normally a delicate, one can almost say, feminine quality to it, and David created a still life with motorcycle parts and tools, so, he used that same type of idea, but for descriptive purposes, he gave it a more gritty, much more masculine feel to it. A kind of mixture, taking a traditional subject matter but handling it in a rather unique way."

Delving onto the track, the aggressiveness displayed in the painting *Infield* only enhances David's formula with lively color and intense action. The dynamics of the painting are manifest in the dialogue displayed in Henry De Gouw (#79)'s submissive stance where he is forced

to move aside as Kurt Lentz's motorcycle catapults him past, almost creating a direct perpendicular offshoot with Steve Arnold in pursuit. (For reference, the riders are racing toward a stretch of the oval.)

It was possibly due to these rigorous conditions that David's art moves beyond the circuit, a coalescing effort with the culture off the track and the riders, not perceived as contenders, but friends, as well as the spectators. For Bob, David's decisive movement away from the track was due to David's interest in the entirety of the culture. "What's really interesting is to look at the people," Bob says. "Look at the scenes. Look at the mechanic taking a wheel off. The people at a hot dog stand. And girls hanging around a guy. David was a great observer of that racing scene." Dan added to this image by describing David's reason for painting serene scenes as a way for him to compare and contrast the changes in the culture over the years. "A lot of David's paintings were of the grand ole days when racing was nowhere near controlled and formalized as it is now," he says. "You can't go to the Salt Flats in your bathing suit and get on your motorcycle and race."

A profound contrast to *Infield*, *Untitled (Five Riders)*, created in 1957, is serene. It's an act of storytelling of innocuous retrospective analysis that's mirrored with the layered use of pen for shadows, shadows that further accentuate their nonracing persona, further cemented by the relaxed atmosphere and soft sepia ink and wash tones. The subject matter is presented on two fronts, the more obvious variable on the right with three riders conversing, the one in the middle, accentuating the languid state by removing his protective gear, his goggles, and the left rider with a relaxed pose. The other side (the left) mirrors the going ons on the right, seeing as the riders' movements are a physical rendering of actual events, a mimicry that can be seen as an exaggeration.

The companionship I've mentioned various times is amplified by a "theme" in some of his paintings: an artistic discourse portrayed in post-crash scenes. The description "post-crash" was said verbatim by Dan and

Bob. These scenes are an illustration of brotherly bonds forged in shared danger, which relates earlier to David's interest in the subtleties of the racing culture. "They're not gory or gruesome, nothing to attract the attention of somebody who watched and see the spectacular stuff," explains Dan. "But you can see the people standing around. You can read their gestures. You knew what they were saying looking at the scene. You don't see the rider or the bike anymore, it was the aftermath."

Marlboro Oval is a post-crash painting that Dan expressed great interest in. After reiterating the fact that the racer in the piece is not crashing the motorcycle, Dan focuses on the dichotomy of space and action, which, interestingly, relates to my earlier analysis of Wet Paddock. "When you look at it, there's a huge amount of empty space," he begins. "There's just a lot of gray of the banking and then the figures are off in the upper part of the painting, which creates a visual tension. If anything, you almost want to see the figures at the bottom. There's a sort of weight. It all seems to be kind of suspended up there and then, after that moment of gray, there is a little patch of red on the ground. Now that somehow, has a kind of important meaning. Now it doesn't mean it's blood, it doesn't mean it's paint, but it does, again, create this visual tension. It just draws you to it, and again, the understanding of the gestures of the riders, they are very well observed, the kind of emptiness to it, and yet within that emptiness there, it creates a bit of anxiety."

A similar piece is *Fallen Rider*, and could very well be more powerful in its message, the overall effect portrayed in how ambiguity permeates the overall piece. The only possible connection to racing in the painting is the title; the racers them-



Untitled, 2000, oil on canvas, 14" x 22".

selves aren't wearing racing gear, and the terrain is not indigenous to a circuit. The viewer is therefore almost forced to focus on the only action in the painting, the people, the gestures, which are usually marginalized, but are now brought to the forefront.

In what I see as another way of expressing an interest in unearthing innocuous elements, and, in turn, finding something beautiful from an otherwise brutal, grotesque happening, David took broken parts from when an engine blew on his Aermacchi Sprint 250/350cc, like a spark plug and a piece of the head, and submerged and thus preserved them in a clear, blue-tinted resin. Likewise, a broken (now two pieces) sodium-filled valve and pieces of a valve stem of a Manx Norton live on as relics in clear resin. David even constructed something wholly separate, albeit beautiful and unique from a familiar object, a strip of angle iron became a mold for a fiberglass relief sculpture. Fascinated by fiberglass from the days when he raced his Aermacchi, David constructed outdoor fiberglass sculptures and relief sculptures for indoors.

But like many artists, David was reticent when it came to his work. "David wasn't open to talking much about work in progress," reveals Harriett, quoting one of David's signature lines. "I just paint them. I don't explain them." He wanted the viewer to be engaged with what they see."

With that final thought in mind, Rusty, when on the subject of what David's work meant to him, said "As an artist, I think most of it was because David wanted to preserve the racing culture, pictures kind of get lost. But if you do it in art, it kind of lasts longer, a little bit more, a desire to hang on, to preserve a piece of artwork than just a picture."

So whatever the real reason or hidden purpose behind David's work might be, I think this idea holds true. David and his legacy on the two-wheeled machine will forever live on and evolve in his art. **M**

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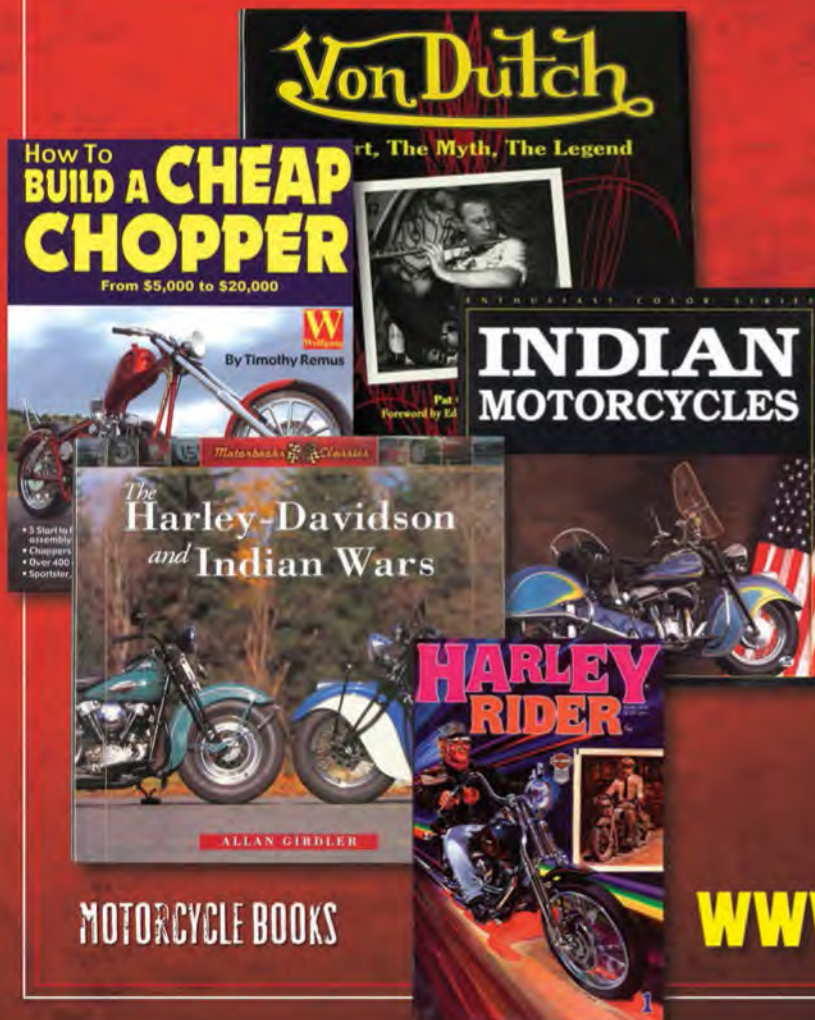


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VINTAGE IRON HITS THE ROAD

Bikes old and new gather for two days of festivities at Wheels Through Time

Have you ever seen a cool vintage or custom bike tucked away in someone's garage and think "Man, if I owned that, I'd ride the wheels off it"? Ever go to a bike show and see a vintage bike rolled from an enclosed trailer over to its spot, then back again at the end of the night, and think "That bike is meant to be ridden!"? While we respect how anyone wants to use his motorcycle, we know there are tons of enthusiasts who do actually ride their vintage iron and have never even considered entering a show. Hell, most of us who work at *Motorcycle* are those people!

With that in mind, we launched our now-annual Motorcycle Kickstart Classic riding event where owners of vintage motorcycles can gather to have a good time and, most importantly, ride the wheels off of their vintage iron. This past May, we had one of our most fun and exciting events to date.

For the 2015 rendition of the Kickstart Classic sponsored by BAKER Drivetrain, more than 70 participants

gathered at the Wheels Through Time (WTT) museum in Maggie Valley, North Carolina, on Thursday, May 28, for the kickoff cookout hosted by WTT owner Dale Walksler and the museum staff. Right away, we all knew we were in for a treat based on some of the incredible motorcycles







that had shown up. I mean, the kind of stuff usually reserved for high-end shows and museums. The camaraderie was immediately evident, which is one of the reasons why we see so many returning riders to the Kickstart Classic.

The format of the Classic was a little bit different this year, based on some of the concerns and feedback we had previously received. One of the most repeated comments was that attendees wanted to be able to spend more time at WTT, something I can personally understand. I can't even count how many times I've been there, and I still love walking around and finding things I've never seen before or enjoying new exhibits. Also, Maggie Valley and the immediate surrounding area is widely regarded as the motorcycle mecca of the East, with some of the best riding roads to be found anywhere in the country. So for this year's event, we decided to stay at WTT for the entire weekend, and Dale supplied a bunch of phenomenal ride suggestions for people to try in smaller groups every day.

Friday morning saw a complete gathering of all the motorcycles and riders in attendance in the WTT parking lot. It was possibly our broadest collection at an event to date. One rider brought out his





beautiful red and black 1929 Harley JD, which was the oldest machine ridden during the event. It was joined by an impressive collection of early-1930s 74" and 45" flatheads that covered the many mountainous miles with nonrecirculating oil systems and three-speed transmissions. A bunch of Knuckleheads (the motorcycle ... and I guess the people, too) made the trip out, including the legendary drag racer and AMA Hall of Famer Pete Hill on his dual-carb daily rider, who, at 83 years young, can still outride your punk ass. "Modern" Panheads rounded out the vintage Harley contingent, with their classic



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mid-century styling. That's not to say this is a Harley-dominated event; attendees were treated to some stunning vintage Japanese motorcycles as well as a couple of Triumphs, a Vincent, and Editor-In-Chief Buzz Kanter's Moto Guzzi. Indians, old and new, added to the diversity of the motorcycles present as well. Riders on new motorcycles of all makes also joined in on the fun, as the point of the event is really just to get people together who enjoy and appreciate vintage machinery. We end up with a great group every year!

Not only were the motorcycles diverse, but as a testament to the quality of the event, people came from all over the US to take part in the festivities. New Jersey, Texas, and Wisconsin plates could all be found strewn in with the Southern majority.



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And Joe Sparrow, famous in the motorcycle community for appearing at just about every event anywhere in North America, even showed up on his 460,000-mile Honda Gold Wing to add a few more miles to its impressive service life. Out of all the motorcycles in attendance, Mario Cavallone's custom Knucklehead always seemed to draw the biggest crowd. His first ground-up build



ever, Mario finished it just in time to do a break-in oil change before bringing it to the Kickstart Classic. A stunning example of classiness and restraint, the S&S Cycle Knucklehead is backed by a six-speed BAKER transmission, which makes it the perfect poster bike for the BAKER Drivetrain-sponsored event.

The two allotted riding days consisted of groups tackling different incredible rides throughout the western North Carolina area. These groups were coming and going from WTT every day where the action never seemed to fade away. Those of us lucky enough to be there Saturday afternoon even got to enjoy famed motorcycle collector and comedian Jay Leno who was being given a tour of the museum by Dale. Maggie Valley's nightlife isn't exactly ... in existence, but hotel parking lots and the couple of bars there made great hangout spots for Kickstart riders to chill out with their bikes and talk about the day's ride. Naturally, at least one person in every group was

on his hands and knees adjusting something on his motorcycle.

The bottom line is that the annual Kickstart Classic is an event that allows like-minded enthusiasts to get together and ride their vintage machines the way they are meant to be ridden. **M**

SOURCES

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Below: Buzz's 1931 Indian 101 Scout that he's owned and ridden for more than a decade. The short-lived 101, which was produced from 1928 to '31, was considered one of the best-handling and most-stable motorcycles of the time and for decades after. It was, and still is, the bike of choice for the Wall of Death riders.

WHEN IT COMES TO A TEXTILE RIDING SUIT, I LOOK FOR AN all-weather package. I want the suit to fit well and be comfortable in the hot weather (lots of air vents, please), rain (waterproof, please), and cold (air-tight and layered for body warmth).

The first time I tried to figure out the three layers of the Indian Tour jacket, I felt like Harry Houdini with a straight jacket. I eventually realized the jacket includes a main outer shell, a zip-in/zip-out waterproof layer, and a quilted Thermolite liner. Let's start with comfort, and this jacket scores high in that area. There are amply long sleeves that work with your arms on just about any handlebars. There are elastic Velcro adjustments at the waist and zippers at the wrists with adjustable Velcro fasteners, a pair of adjustable straps on each sleeve to minimize flapping from the wind, and body armor at the shoulders and elbows ... just in case.

For warm-weather riding, there are plenty of zip-open air vents: the two large flaps in front fold down into large pockets air vents by each shoulder and longer vents on the back allow the warm air to exit. Nice.

Feeling cold? Add the layers inside, close all of the vents, and, if it's really cold, zip on the storm collar — a neck and face guard that looks sort of like a heavy-duty bandanna. If it's raining,

- + **Clever black/white button-matching system at sleeve cuff for liner.**
- + **Waterproof liner.**
- **Black, while traditional, isn't the best color for being seen.**



simply add the waterproof lining with or without the cold-weather liner.

The back of the jacket features the Indian Motorcycle logo in silver reflective material, and there's a small reflective patch on the front at each shoulder. The Tour jacket is available in S-5XL sizes.

For the Tour pants, I ordered the same waist size as I wear in jeans, and they fit fine over jeans or thin pants. The waist has elastic sections above the hips for comfort when riding. The fly zipper is backed up by a sealed expansion area to keep rain out. A double-hook clasp keeps it all together, and there are

deep-zippered pockets up front with plenty of room. The pants also have a zippered air vent on both legs above the knees, but I'm not sure where the air is supposed to go out.

Expansion sections below the vents and above the knees provide soft body armor protection. The pant leg bottoms expand to make it easier to pull on riding boots, with a long zipper and Velcro fasteners. There's subtle reflective 3M Scotchlite piping on the hips and along the zippers on the lower legs.

The manufacturer claims the pants are 100 percent waterproof and that there's an "antimicrobial odor control fabric at crotch," which I will have to take its word on. The Tour pants come in sizes 30-44. —*Buzz Kanter*



SOURCES

Indian Motorcycle
Men's Indian Motorcycle Tour Jacket, \$499.99
Men's Indian Motorcycle Tour Pants, \$249.99
877/204-3697
IndianMotorcycle.com



The small Softbag 3 is big enough for a full-face helmet with room to spare.

The roll-up liner in the main compartment makes it completely waterproof.



The small Softbag 3 shown on the BMW F 800 R is expanded and secured on the luggage rack.

NEW FOR 2015, BMW MOTORRAD HAS COME OUT WITH two textile bags — called Softbag 3s — that secure easily to a luggage rack or rear pillion. The large Softbag 3 holds 50 liters while the small one holds 35 liters and is just the right size to stow a full-face helmet in. Both bags have four additional water-resistant, external zippered pockets, one on top and three on the sides. Both bags are also expandable, adding an additional 5 liters of storage space in the main compartment.

The Softbag 3's dark gray outer shell is made of a mix of 65 percent polyester and 35 percent polyurethane. This material allows the bag to hold its shape but with enough flexibility to make packing it easier. It's also resistant to dirt and water and is easy to clean.

The sturdy rigid base is made of EVA material, which feels like a thick, textured rubber coating. It keeps the bag in shape, and its antislip coating keeps the bag sitting securely wherever you mount it. The back is also reinforced with EVA and can be used as a back support for pillion passengers if the bag is mounted on a luggage rack. We tested this feature on the small bag, and it works just as described.

The small Softbag 3 comes with six attachment straps (three lengths) with a snap clip on one end and a loop on the other. All you need to do is find a mounting point to loop the open end through, then attach the snap clip to each of the four connectors near the bottom of the bag and tighten the straps. If



The small (top) and large (below) Softbags mount with snap-clip, adjustable straps and feature four external pockets and expandable main compartments.

- + Water-resistant zippers and water-proof lining.
- + Light and easy to carry.
- + Smart mounting system.
- Only available in one color.

you have a BMW luggage rack, there's a retainer (an open pocket) on the bottom of the bag that fits over the rear end of the rack, which secures the Softbag even more.

The Softbags also come with a detachable padded shoulder strap, but the wide, padded carry handle that's sewn into the top of the bag works so well for me that I usually leave the shoulder strap behind.

Large reflective light gray stripes on the sides and front work well to increase visibility and enhance the overall look of these classy bags.

—Tricia Szulewski

SOURCES

BMW Motorrad
BMW Small Softbag 3, \$184
BMW Large Softbag 3, \$229
BMW-Motorrad.com





1

1 The CL-2015 Journey sport tank bag is made from UV-treated Tri-Max ballistic nylon with Fibertech accents. The Journey has reflective piping, coil-over zippers, protective base material, and an office organizer under the lid. It's expandable from 13- to 18-liter sizes. The Journey GPS Mate (\$49.95) is optional. Strap mount, \$109.95; magnetic mount, \$119.95. Nelson-Rigg USA, 714/850-1811, NelsonRigg.com.

2



2 Leatherworks' hand-braided bags are offered in three different styles: triple weave, Fat Boy, and Cross Bones. The Shamrock toolbag features a Spanish triple weave. Leatherworks' various bags can also be customized to fit your preference. The Shamrock toolbag features Leatherworks' inlay work. The price varies based on the design, size, and location. \$175. The Leatherworks, 888/265-9650, LeatherworksInc.com.



3

3 Rivco's 5-pound luggage/rack bag features water-resistant nylon and measures 11" x 15-3/4" x 12". It has zippered outer storage compartments on three sides, carry handles, detachable shoulder strap, and a hidden water and dust-proof cover. Slots in the bottom allow it to be locked to the rack using the optional locking rods. \$79.95. Rivco, 888/801-8222, RivcoProducts.com.

4 Mustang's flat-backed bags are made of reinforced fiberglass, and covered with high-quality expanded vinyl. Bags and lids feature a rubber seal, and the inside surface is lined with a durable, felt-like material. Saddlebags are undrilled for a universal fit. Bags measure 26" L x 15" H x 9" W with a 21" x 9" opening. Overall capacity is 17 quarts each. Studded with conchos set, \$799; no studs or conchos set, \$759. Mustang, 800/243-1392, MustangSeats.com.



5

5 Küryakyn's saddlebag liners keep things organized and have handles and a shoulder strap to make unloading and carrying your luggage quick and hassle free. Made of durable Cordura, the liners fit Honda GL1800s, most metrics, and Harley Road King hard and leather saddlebags. \$59.99-\$69.99. Küryakyn, 866/277-9598, Kuryakyn.com.



4

6 Touratech's Adventure dry bags are certified at a rating of IP64 for waterproofing. The bags have compression straps on each side and tension straps over their closures along with nylon carrying handles and detachable, padded shoulder straps. Including 3M Scotchlite reflective material, the Adventure bags come in 31-, 49-, and 89-liter sizes and black, silver, tan, and yellow. Starting at \$110. Touratech USA, 800/491-2926, Touratech-USA.com. **M**



6



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Doppler Labs has introduced DUBS Acoustic filters, stylish, high-design earplugs that utilize advanced acoustical physics. Rather than shutting out sound in the manner of traditional foam earplugs, the DUBS act as an audio filter, letting preferred frequencies enter while minimizing the rest and preserving sound clarity for things like music and conversation. The DUBS reduce audio levels by an average of 12dB. The impact of this can have an important effect over time: noise-induced hearing loss, while common, also tends to be gradual, and therefore difficult to notice. The DUBS come in four colors: teal, blue, pink, and white. They come in a small protective case that fits easily into a pocket and are reusable. \$25. Doppler Labs, 866/308-9739, GetDUBS.com.

The women's High Racer Glove from Racer Gloves USA is based on the popular men's High Racer Glove, but in a women-specific pattern. The women's High Racer glove features a kangaroo leather palm, carbon fiber palm sliders, and carbon fiber knuckle, finger, and wrist protectors. It's vented in the fingers and wrist as well. The glove is available in white/black and in sizes from medium to XL. \$219.99. Racer Gloves USA, 408/852-0700, RacerGlovesUSA.com.



If Harleys are your game or even if you just want to learn more about them, GreaseRag.com now has a limited-time bundle of the 50 best Harley magazines we've ever printed. Not only are issues of *American Iron Magazine* included in the bundle, but so are *American Iron Choppers*, *American Iron Tuner*, *Thunder Alley*, *Customs*, *Softail Special*, *Baggers & Bobbers*, *Hot XL*, *Hottest Custom Harleys*, *Great Weekend Projects*, and the collector's special, *American Glory: 100 Years of Harley-Davidson*. Essentially, every aspect of Harley-Davidson life is covered in this bundle. \$39.95. GreaseRag, 203/425-8777 ext: 114, GreaseRag.com.

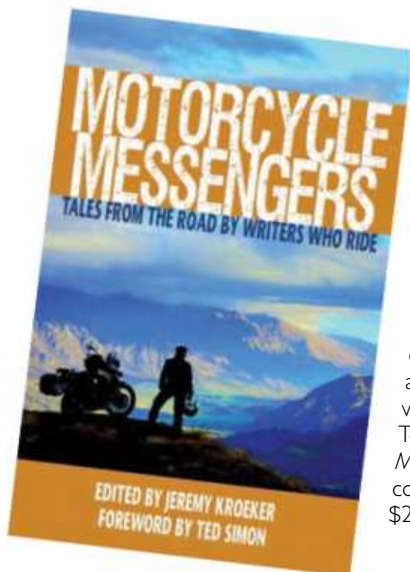


The Breakout vest from Crank & Stroker is made from top-grain genuine cowhide with a wax finish; it features two chest pockets, two waist pockets, and two interior concealed carry pockets. The double front closure is secured by a heavy-duty #10 zipper and snap-down storm flap, and it's finished in Crank & Stroker's signature printed lining. It's available in regular and tall sizes. \$190. Crank & Stroker Supply Co., 888/441-3331, CrankAndStroker.com.

The Granit Victory X-Plus 68 moto chain lock packs a lot of security into its small shape, and when attached to the 12KS loop chain, your security becomes even more formidable. The Victory's security innovation lies in its round shape and three independently rotating pieces that make it almost impossible to attack with tools. The Victory features a 14mm steel locking bolt and comes with two keys (one has a LED light). The chain, bolt, lock body, and supporting elements of the locking mechanism are all made of temper-hardened steel. \$179.99. Abus, 312/640-1111, Abus.com.



TCX's all-new X-CUBE Evo series includes the Air and Waterproof, both of which utilize the Michelin Urban sole. Drawing inspiration from the proven technology of the Michelin Pilot Road 3 and its patented X-Sipe Technology, the high-performance Michelin Urban sole provides excellent grip over mixed terrain both on- and off-road. The wide contact surface allows for optimal adherence on the pegs for ideal stability and control. While the Waterproof version covers all-weather conditions, the Air offers extra breathable Air Tech fabric to handle the demands of warmer climate conditions. Both boots feature new PVC micro-injected outer ankle reinforcement and a reinforced inner ankle, heel, and shift pad. They also have a speed-lacing closure system with reflex touch. \$159.99. TCX Boots, RideTCXBoots.com.



The new women's Tantalus Retro 3/4 helmet from Harley-Davidson MotorClothes features a fiberglass shell, snaps for shields and visors, and custom graphics that rebel against the "traditional" black helmet. This core open-face motorcycle helmet is a stylish way for lady enthusiasts to build their individual look from the top down. It features a double D-ring chin strap and comes with a helmet bag. It meets DOT requirements and weighs 2 pounds, 10.4 ounces. \$175. Harley-Davidson MotorClothes, H-D.com.

Motorcycle Messengers: Tales From The Road By Writers Who Ride is a collection of travel stories from some of the leading writers in the genre plus a few people you're unlikely to have heard of. Stuff a copy into your saddlebag, read a story by the fire, and discover your new favorite motorcycle travel writer. Edited by Jeremy Kroeker with a foreword by Ted Simon and images by Alfonse Palaima, *Motorcycle Messengers* takes readers on a journey to every corner of the earth via motorcycling adventure. \$21.95. Jeremy Kroeker, OscillatorPress.com.

SamcoSport introduces its new Samco coolant hose kit for the 2015 Yamaha R1. It's available in 19 different color options and includes all three hoses. A clip kit is also available. SamcoSport, SamcoSport.com/USA.



Combining technological tradition with historic styling cues has resulted in BMW's landmark R nineT motorcycle. Mustang Seats now offers its Tripper Fastback seat and its 12"-wide vintage solo for riders who want to increase the long-distance comfort and capability of their R nineTs. Mustang also makes a matching vintage passenger seat, allowing two people to ride in comfort without taking away from the motorcycle's classic look. Solo, \$159; Tripper Fastback, \$369. Mustang Seats, 800/243-1392, MustangSeats.com.



The Rumble tail bag from Iron Rider has a tactical look and feel that will attract riders of all sorts. Two bags in one, the Rumble includes the large base bag with an optional small bag. It comes equipped with a water-resistant zipper, rain cover, and MOLLE webbing for use with modular pouch attachment systems. The larger base bag measures 15" x 6" x 26" and has a 38-liter capacity, and the smaller top roll bag expands to 15" x 5" x 10" and has a 12-liter capacity. The base bag offers an additional 5" of drop-down expansion on each side. The Rumble comes with four 1" quick-release buckles for mounting; abrasion-resistant, non-slip material on the bottom of the bag, and multiple storage pockets throughout. It's finished off with reflective piping for added nighttime visibility and riding safety. \$179.99. Iron Rider; 800/558-7755, DowcoPowersports.com.



Watchmaker Reactor introduces the Warp, a solid 316L stainless steel tachymeter watch. The Warp allows its wearer to track the speed of any moving object over a set distance. Numerical markings along the tachymeter of the Warp make it simple to calculate speed. In addition to speed markings, the Warp has a 1/20-second chronograph with a 1/4-second sweep hand. Superluminova hour markings and hands make the watch easy to read in low-light conditions. Complete with a 43-1/2mm case, the solid forged design of the Warp and screw-down crown make the watch water resistant up to 200 meters. The Warp is available in several color-plating options with polished, brushed, or sandblasted finishes and either stainless steel, IPB, IP gun, or IP gold-plated bracelets. \$600. Reactor; ReactorWatch.com.

The Profile D30 short is constructed from premium 7-ounce Lycra, similar to a cycling short but without the padded chamois. The contoured D30 padding is strategically placed in the outer thigh/hip area as well as the tailbone. The silicone grippers on the inside of the leg and waist keep long socks and jerseys tucked in. A convenient fly opening allows for quick pit stops. Lightweight and comfortable, the Profile D30 short makes a great addition to your safety gear collection. \$89.99. RacerGloves, 408/852-0700, RacerGlovesUSA.com.



The Corsair-X from Arai features a host of improvements like the Variable Axis System (VAS) shield system and IC Duct-5, which provides 11 percent more airflow. Larger three-position switches make vent operation easier and help limit road noise and water intrusion when fully closed. The new Type 12 diffuser is 20mm longer, taking 19 percent more air than the previous design, while the new VAS Max-V (BV) shield provides increased visibility in all types of riding. The Corsair-X features a new Eco-Pure antimicrobial liner, which stays fresher longer. Other interior updates include speaker recesses, a large, removable chin curtain, a new, replaceable chin vent that flows more air, and a new emergency release strap tab. Additional room in the mouth area allows for a more open feeling when worn. It's available in black, Black Frost, white, Aluminum Silver; Hayden, Pedrosa, and Vinales replicas, as well as a special 30th Anniversary Freddie Spencer replica. From \$839.95. Arai, 610/366-7220, AraiAmericas.com. **M**

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LETTERS

Continued from page 14

the early 1970s, the Daytona International Speedway was host to the United States Grand Prix in 1964-65. Mike Hailwood won both times on a 500cc MV Agusta. The American event was dropped from the schedule the next year, and wouldn't return here till 1988 at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. Some lucky devils in Florida, however, got to see Mike Hailwood, Phil Reed, Giacomo Agostini, and the rest on those early, narrow-tired racers of the early '60s.

When the Grand Prix guys returned to Daytona in the early '70s, they added some thrilling moments, such as Johnny Cecotto's heroic rides. Those of us who idolized Gary Nixon don't like to think about '74 when he had the race in hand, tried too hard in the final laps, and crashed, handing it to Giacomo.

Indeed, there was an era when the best in the world came to Daytona.

Chris Hodenfield
Darien, CT



Fugly

I'm looking at the Kawasaki Vulcan S in the May/June issue, and it's just so fugly! It's right up there with a Suzuki Madura and a Hyosung. I prefer Ducatis and, of course, Harley-Davidsons. Nothing looks better than a H-D Super Glide. The Japanese bikes are great, but they just can't get the look right! However, I do have a 1971 Honda 750. Now that's a great bike!

Tom Anguish
Via Internet **M**

On The Web



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Diavel

In the Sept/Oct 2014 issue, Editor Steve Lita rides the 2015 Ducati Diavel Carbon. Find out why Steve will go to great lengths to ride one: travel long distances, pay out unexpected fees, and endure great pain.



Jacobs

Read about the art of Scott Jacobs, how Scott became infatuated with painting Harleys, and his approach to creating his work. Steven W-B's story is now online!

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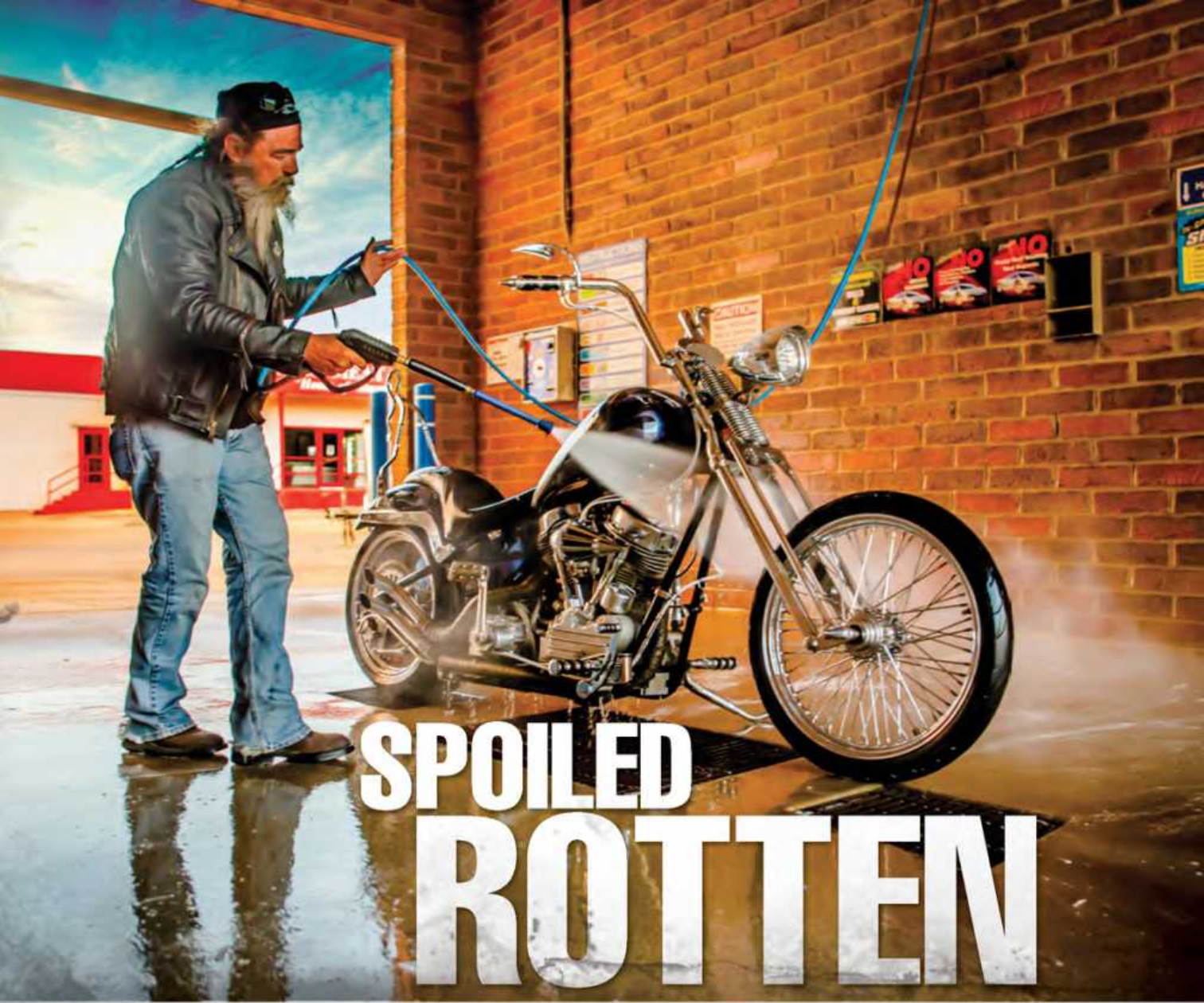
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